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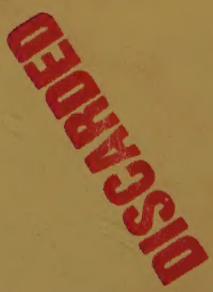

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BOOKS BY FRANK SHAY

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(in separate pamphlets)

THE APPLETON BOOK
OF
HOLIDAY PLAYS

EDITED BY
FRANK SHAY

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK : LONDON : MCMXXX

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

JANE PARKER

56158

FOREWORD

The plays included in this collection are examples of several attempts to escape the traditional *tableaux vivants* which heretofore have represented our holiday dramatic efforts. It is not so easy, as one might be led to believe, to dramatize the most important events in the lives of those we respect and revere. Those events in themselves are pure drama.

The most dramatic moments in the life of Christopher Columbus were when he set sail on his voyage of discovery and when he made his first landfall. Yet neither of these events can be considered material for the playwright. The canvas on which he is to portray his characters and develop his action is not large enough. Miss Willson has taken the youthful Columbus, some eighteen years before his great achievements, and has succeeded in making the discoverer very real to us. In the same manner Mr. Sterling has taken Robert E. Lee on the day Virginia seceded rather than the one on which he surrendered his sword to General Grant, an event, by the way, that for pure drama has never been equaled by any dramatist.

Miss Levinger has taken the humble birth of Lincoln rather than any other occasion in his life for giving us a dramatic picture of the great emancipator. Mr. Mackaye has given us two portraits of Washington, one the youth and the other the general, both away from the scenes on which he won his fame.

It is in their more humble moments that we see our heroes in the light we can understand, the light of their humanity. The Washington of today, the legendary Washington, is a plague to all healthy normal children and quite as remote to grown-ups. Lee and Lincoln seem destined for the same

fate. We can better understand these heroes if we know them as human beings, commonplace humans, who, when the occasion demanded it, rose to the heights. These playwrights are to be congratulated for making these characters very real to us.

The lighter side of New Year's Day, All Fools' Day and Halloween has been achieved by M. Mathurin Dondo in his two delightful farces, and in the harlequinades of Mr. Clements and Mr. Hughes we come to a closer understanding of the true meanings of Thanksgiving and Christmas. The one somber note in the volume is my own play which was so conceived in reverence and dedicated to the memory of the gallant members of my own company who did not return from France.

I am deeply indebted to the authors who have so kindly permitted me to use their plays. It is a pleasure as well as a duty to acknowledge their coöperation.

F. S.

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THE PIE AND THE TART

Adapted from a French farce of the fifteenth century

by Mathurin Dondo

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THE PIE AND THE TART

CHARACTERS

WINDFED, LEANFACE } *vagabonds*
GAUTIER, *a pastry cook*
MARION, *his wife*

This may have happened in a quaint corner of old Paris, in the time of Master François Villon. To bring back those days to our imaginations, we need but few devices, such as a skyline of pointed roofs and spires, a protruding gable on one side, a massive wall on the other, with a bench beneath a shrine. From the gabled house swings the sign of the pastry shop, whose bay window displays alluring delicacies.

GAUTIER *is as proud of his culinary art as a lyric poet of his triolets. His rubicund face and generous stomach reveal a festive inclination, but his artistic temperament is subject to irascible moods. He is blessed with a most gracious wife, a woman of sculptural proportions, placid face, and somewhat haughty expression. We suspect that* GAUTIER *is a trifle jealous, a very pardonable weakness, when we consider that he is twice the age of his beautiful spouse.*

To give to the setting a Villonesque humor, we need only revive a couple of Master François' ribald companions. A hungry look in a hawklike face, a gaunt body, a scarecrow accoutrement, and there goes WINDFED. *He is so*

NOTE. A French elaboration of the theme of this play is available in the author's book, published by D. C. Heath and Company, with whose permission the English elaboration was prepared.

tall and so flexible that he could, without surprising us, make his entrance into a house through a chimney flue. His ambiguous mode of living has developed in him, if not intelligence, at least a certain cunning in avoiding embarrassing situations.

LEANFACE, *no less ragged than his comrade, presents a sensitive face and delicate features in a small body. His movements as well as his words are studied, not lacking in distinction and a certain grace. Is he one of those wayward students of the university; a dramatic author vying with Gringoire for a bit of fame and a morsel of food? At any rate, he does not lack wit nor resourcefulness, of a kind, although his moral sense may have been blunted by the harshness of life.*

It is winter. Patches of snow cling to the roofs and cornices. In the late afternoon, a dreary sky, bitter cold. WINDFED *and* LEANFACE *stand at opposite ends of the stage.*

WINDFED

Brrr. . . .

(*He walks up and down the stage, his long body shriveled with cold, as if trying to keep his bones from rattling.*)

LEANFACE

What is the matter?

WINDFED

I am frozen. I can't stand still. I am shivering from head to foot. Look at my rags! Every bone in my body is sticking out like bits of straw from an old mattress.

LEANFACE

If it may comfort you, look at my attire. My cloak has more holes than a sieve, and the wind plays hide and seek around my back and chest. If my doublet seems more precious than yours, you are welcome to an exchange of shreds. Brrr. . . .

(*He paces up and down, his arms hugging his chest as a protection against the wind.*)

WINDFED
What is the matter?

LEANFACE
I am frozen to the bones. I feel as wretched as a starving dog. (*A pause. Then a faint smile after a steady look at his companion, a look in which there is not so much a sentiment of compassion as an attempt to draw out his thought.*) We make a fine pair on this street corner, we two!

WINDFED
Brrr. . . . (*Same action as before.*) I am deadly cold, and I have not eaten so much as a crumb this whole day.

LEANFACE
Neither have I. I am starved, and I haven't a penny.

WINDFED (*in turn, after a prolonged gaze, as if trying to plumb his fellow's inner thoughts, attempting a smile*)
Well, I suppose there is nothing to do but wait here with mouths open, till something drops in from the sky. Unless. . . .

LEANFACE (*eager for any suggestion*)
Unless what?

WINDFED (*surveying the place with rapid glances and weighing his words*)
Unless we *borrow* a dinner and risk paying for it with the gallows.

LEANFACE
Have you any scheme in mind?

WINDFED
I would risk a good deal to get my stomach full.

LEANFACE (*another pause, during which both try to read in each other's eyes what the lips dare not convey*)
If you chanced to find a gold coin in the street, would you keep it in your stocking till next Christmas?

WINDFED
Show me where to find a gold coin, and I will show you what to do with it.

LEANFACE
Let us not talk about money. There is no such thing for us in this world. (*This beating around the bush seems useless. Aonther pause. They turn their backs to each other, deep in thought. When* LEANFACE *turns to speak to his companion, the latter does not move.*) Listen. I have an idea.

WINDFED
Ideas are plentiful. Fools have lots of them, but a hungry man cannot stomach them.

LEANFACE (*insisting without the least conviction*)
I say, I have an idea. Let us hunt for a house, where one can get lodging and a good meal for the asking.

WINDFED (*turning sharply*)
Do you know of any?

LEANFACE
I don't.

WINDFED (*in jest*)
I don't either. But I know of plenty, where you can get all you want if you have the price.

LEANFACE (*close to* WINDFED'S *ear; the words try to insinuate much, in a sort of hissing whisper*)
And if you haven't the price, why not get what you can with your wits, if you have any? (*Sharply, as if giving up the attempt to find an accomplice.*) Good-by and good luck to you.

WINDFED
Where are you going?

LEANFACE
From door to door to ask for charity.

(*He goes out to the right, that is, the side opposite to the pastry shop.*)

WINDFED

I think I'll do the same. (*He walks to the left, steps toward the pastry shop and begs for alms.*) Charity, my good baker, in the name of our Lord and all His blessed saints. Have pity on a poor starving man, who has not eaten for the last three days. Ave Maria gratia plena. . . .

(*He continues muttering the prayer.*)

GAUTIER (*opening the door. His voice tries to be kind and apologetic*)

My good man, I have no money. My wife is not at home. She keeps the purse. I have nothing to give you. I am sorry.

(*He shuts the door.* WINDFED *goes out to the right.* LEANFACE *enters from the left and begs at the same door.*)

LEANFACE

Charity, if you please, for the love of God and the blessed Virgin Mary. The Lord rewards him who gives to the poor. Have pity on a poor man who has had nothing to eat for a whole wretched week. Ave Maria. . . .

(*He mutters a prayer.* MARION *opens the door. Her voice betrays no feeling in reciting this much-used formula.*)

MARION

My husband is not at home. He keeps all the money. I have nothing to give you. Come when he is at home.

(*She shuts the door.* LEANFACE *crosses the stage slowly, with measured step, chin in hand. He sits down deliberately on a bench to the right. At first his eyes are glued to his feet, then his head rises slowly and, like a hungry wolf, he seems to sniff the air for an approaching prey. At this moment the door of the pastry shop opens, and* GAUTIER *steps out.*)

GAUTIER (*apparently looking for his wife, for he calls her, and seems to be in a great hurry*)
Marion! Where are you? Marion! I must be gone. . . . (MARION *appears on the doorstep.*) Wife, I am going to dine with my friend, the beadle. I promised him that chicken pie, the big pie in the shop window. I'll send some one for it later.

MARION
Send for it? How am I to know who is the right messenger?

GAUTIER
That's so! (*He seems to ponder over this unexpected difficulty.*) Let me see. . . . What shall I do? (*His face suddenly illumined.*) I have it. I'll send a boy or some beggar from the street. To make sure he is the right person, I'll give him a sign by which you shall know him. Now we must be cautious. Here is a safe and simple means of identification. The messenger must kiss your hand and say: "Master Gautier sends me for the pie." Is that understood?

MARION
Yes, that is simple. Whoever comes and kisses my hand and asks for the pie in your name is the right messenger.

GAUTIER
That is it! Don't forget. Now I must hurry or I shall be late. Good-by, wife.
(*He goes out to the left.* MARION *reënters the house.* LEANFACE *remains seated on the bench. In overhearing the directions given by* GAUTIER *to his wife, he scarcely controls his interest in the matter without attracting attention.* WINDFED *enters.*)

WINDFED (*looking inquiringly at* LEANFACE, *who remains immobile, rapt in deep thought*)
Did you get anything? What are you doing there?

LEANFACE (*calmly quizzical*)
I am thinking of life and its deepest problems. (*He gets up. There is an air of resolute determination about him.*) I am faint with hunger and when I ask for food I am fed on apologies.

WINDFED
The same here, brother. The husband holds the money, and he is out. The wife told me to come again.

LEANFACE
In my case, the wife holds the purse, and she is not at home. The husband said he could not help me.

WINDFED
Where did you beg?

LEANFACE (*pointing to* GAUTIER'S *house*)
At this door.

WINDFED
So did I. We both got the same treatment, you from the wife, I from the husband. (*He looks quite desperate and ready for any action.*) I am starving.

LEANFACE
If you would fill your stomach, do what I tell you.

WINDFED (*firmly resolute*)
I'll do anything to get a bite, anything.

LEANFACE
Well then, listen. (*He puts one arm around* WINDFED'S *shoulder as if to push him forward, while with the other he points to the pastry shop.*) Go at once to the woman in this house, and ask her for a chicken pie.

WINDFED (*withdrawing with resentment*)
You'd better go yourself and enjoy your own joke.

LEANFACE (*emphatic*)
This is no joke. I speak seriously. Do you want a square meal, yes or no?

WINDFED (*exasperated*)
I want any sort of a meal, square, round, flat, pointed, anything that's filling. Tell me where and how to get it, and I'll do it.

LEANFACE
Then, listen; go to the door of this pastry shop, and knock hard as one who has orders.

WINDFED
You can play your jokes on me! I know this house. It has nothing for me except blows and curses. Thank you. I leave it to you.

LEANFACE (*in a last effort to convince his accomplice*) You think I am jesting? You don't know me yet. (LEANFACE *puts on the air of a vastly superior being, a prince, disguised as a beggar, who betrays his noble origin by word, mien, and gesture.*) You imagine, perhaps you are dealing with a beggar like yourself. My friend, let me tell you a secret. The man you see before you in rags and tatters has more knowledge and wisdom than many a crowned head. But Fate has been cruel to me. Envy and injustice have reduced me to this miserable condition, which, if it were not a question of pride and honor, I could easily abandon. But in this hour of distress, I'll give you a proof of my superior intelligence. Go now to the pastry shop and ask the woman for the chicken pie, the big chicken pie, do you hear? Mark me well. These are exactly the words you must use: "Fair lady, I come from Master Gautier, who sends me for the chicken pie, the big chicken pie in the window. They are waiting for the pie to begin the dinner, and I must hurry back with it." Can you remember that?

WINDFED (*somewhat bewildered, but submissive*)
I think I can. Let me try: I come from Master, Master who?

LEANFACE
Gautier, Master Gautier. Don't forget the name.

WINDFED
I come from Master Gautier, who sends me for the chicken pie, the big chicken pie in the window.

LEANFACE
That's right, but there is something more important. When you have asked for the pie, take the lady's hand and kiss it.

WINDFED
That's easy enough! Are you sure it is only her hand you want me to kiss?

LEANFACE
Don't get impertinent. Kiss the fair lady's hand, that'll be enough for a beggar like you.

WINDFED (*hesitant*)
But what will the husband say, if he happens to be in?

LEANFACE
Idiot! The husband is out, the wife is alone.

WINDFED
Are you sure?

LEANFACE
Quite sure. While you were loafing around, I have set my brains to work and laid my plans with as much precision as a great general. Now, go, do as I say, and don't forget to kiss her hand.

WINDFED
I'd risk a good deal for the chicken pie.

LEANFACE
He who risks nothing, gets nothing. Do you want a chicken pie for dinner, a large, crusty, juicy, savory, golden pie, fit for a king?

WINDFED (*carried away by the vision*)
It must be the same pie I saw in the window; for it, I'd risk my skin. I'll go!

LEANFACE

Be quick, and meet me at this corner.

(LEANFACE *waits with bated breath till his companion reaches the pastry shop. When the door opens,* LEANFACE *steps quickly and carefully out of view.* WINDFED *knocks at the door of the pastry shop. He seems to be rehearsing his lines with great attention.* MARION *opens the door.*)

WINDFED

Madam, I come from Master Gautier, who sends me for the chicken pie, the chicken pie in the window. He told me to hurry back with it. They are waiting for it to start the dinner. They will eat it to your health.

MARION

How am I to know you are the man he sent?

WINDFED (*naïvely*)

If you please, madam, give me your hand to kiss.

MARION

Never mind my hand. Now I know you are the messenger. Come in and I'll give you the pie. (*They go in and shortly* WINDFED *reappears with the pie.* MARION *calls from the doorstep.*) Now be very careful with the pie.

WINDFED

No danger, madam; I shall take as much care of it as a good Christian of his soul. (MARION *shuts the door of the shop.* WINDFED *steps to the center of the stage, holding the pie with uplifted hands as if it were the Holy Grail.*) I have it! I see it! I touch it! I smell it! (*He smells rapturously.*) What a pie! A beautiful pie! A rich-looking pie! A noble complexion of a pie! A princely pie! A royal pie! A pie made for a bishop! A pie to damn the soul of Saint Anthony! A pie to make an angel fall from heaven! Such a radiant pie is ours, such a miraculous pie is mine! Upon my soul I could kiss it! My Lord Pie, I bow to you!

(LEANFACE *comes in while* WINDFED *is bowing to the pie.*)

LEANFACE

The Saints be praised! Can I trust my eyes? Is that you, Windfed?

WINDFED (*with solemn gestures*)

Allow me to introduce you to his Lordship, the Chicken Pie.

LEANFACE (*bowing very low*)

My Lord Pie, your most humble and devoted servant.

WINDFED

Well, Leanface, what do you think of it?

LEANFACE

I never dreamt it would be as big as this. You managed it well. My congratulations! What a marvelous pie! A stupendous pie! A celestial pie!

WINDFED

We have paid enough compliments to this lordly pie. Let us retire to safety in that back street.

LEANFACE

Come, let us go.

(*They go out to the right.* GAUTIER *comes in from the left. His countenance expresses disappointment and certain signs of irascibility. He knocks at the door several times, at first gently enough, then with great impatience.*)

GAUTIER

Open the door. Marion, where are you? Open the door, I say. Marion! Do you want to keep me out on the street?

(MARION *opens the door.*)

MARION (*her surprise evident at the unexpected return of her husband*)

What is the matter? Why are you so angry? Why are you back so soon? Didn't you stay for dinner?

GAUTIER
I found nobody home.

MARION
Nonsense! What is this joke you are trying to play on me?

GAUTIER
There was nobody in, I say. Don't you understand? I found the door shut. Yet I am positive this is the day and hour set for the dinner. I was on time. I walked briskly to the house, thinking of the good dinner I would have. I knock at the door. No answer. I knock and knock, nobody comes. I hammer with all my might, still nobody! Imagine a person of my dignity treated like that? I never had such an insult in my life! Never mind, I shall have my revenge. After all, what do we care for the measly beadle! We are much better off at home, both of us, aren't we, dear?

MARION
We have nothing for dinner.

GAUTIER
We shall eat that chicken pie. It is the best I ever made. We shall enjoy together the product of my art.

MARION
The chicken pie? Where is it?

GAUTIER
Why, in the window, I suppose!

MARION
You sent a man for it. He kissed my hand and I gave it to him. Didn't you see him?

GAUTIER
What are you talking about? I sent nobody for the pie.

MARION
Why, yes, you did. A stranger came.

GAUTIER (*quite excitedly*)
A stranger! Idiot! Didn't I tell you to be careful? Did you give that pie away? Tell me, did you give it away? To whom did you give it? To whom?

MARION
He acted exactly according to your instructions. He asked to kiss my hand.

GAUTIER
You lie! What have you done with that pie? You have been stuffing that parson again, I'll wager. Now I know it.

MARION
Don't make a fool of yourself in the street. You must have lost your mind. Come in and calm yourself

GAUTIER (*regaining his composure*)
I see. You wanted to play a joke on me, didn't you? Come, wife, let us go in and eat that pie.
(*They both enter and the door is shut. Angry voices and great commotion are heard within the pastry shop.* WINDFED *and* LEANFACE *enter. They walk slowly, in silence. Both hold their hands clasped around their proudly protruding stomachs. A supreme happiness radiates from their uplifted faces.*)

WINDFED
Listen, my friend, while my digestion is taking its gentle course, my mind is inclined to think.

LEANFACE
Don't think. It spoils digestion.

WINDFED
Do you know what you should do?

LEANFACE
Don't make me talk. I am too full for utterance.

WINDFED
Wasn't it toothsome?

LEANFACE
I never ate such food in my life.

WINDFED
It must have been baked for a rich lord.

LEANFACE
Baked especially for us.
(*There is a pause, as if the utterance of these few words had exhausted their strength.*)

WINDFED
Say, how would you like some dessert?

LEANFACE
Well, it wouldn't go astray.

WINDFED
Lend me your ear. In the shop window next to the chicken pie is a wonderful apple tart. A big, crisp, crusty apple tart. What a pity to let that go to some jaded bourgeois! Who would appreciate its fine qualities better than you and I? What think you?

LEANFACE
I think you are right. Master Gautier is an artist. It takes us two to fully appreciate his masterpieces.

WINDFED
I have a fancy to engage Master Gautier for my cook.

LEANFACE
I'll invite myself as your permanent guest. . . .

WINDFED
Jesting aside, we must get that apple tart. I say, it was clever of you to make me carry out Master Gautier's instructions. Before I knew you overheard his conversation, I really thought you were a wizard.

LEANFACE
I am a wizard!

WINDFED
So you are. Suppose, then, that you go to the pastry shop, and put it over as I did with the pie.

LEANFACE
Will it work twice?

WINDFED
Why not, brother? The magic words will retain their virtue while the husband is away. He won't be back for another hour or two, you may be sure.

LEANFACE
Very well. I'll try it this time.

WINDFED
Same luck to you as to me.
(WINDFED *goes out to the right, while* LEANFACE *draws near the door of the shop and knocks at the door repeatedly.*)

LEANFACE
Madam, I beg of you, open the door.
(MARION *opens the door and steps out.*)

MARION
What do you want?

LEANFACE
Madam, Master Gautier sends me for the apple tart. He wants it as well as the pie. He requested me to kiss your fair hand, so that there may be no mistake as to the real messenger.

MARION (*very calm, after a moment of deliberation*)
I see. I'll give you the tart. Didn't he also ask for a bottle of wine?

LEANFACE (*hardly able to control his excitement over such unexpected luck*)
You are right, madam. He also asked for wine, not one bottle, but two. Two bottles of his best vintage, which he reserved for this special occasion.

MARION
Wait a moment. I have to go down the cellar to fetch the wine. I'll give you two bottles with the tart. Just wait here at the door.
(MARION *reënters the shops and closes the door.* LEANFACE *stands with his back to the door and a beatific smile adorns his lips.*)

GAUTIER (*opens the door with a jerk and rushes upon* LEANFACE *with his stick raised*)
What have you done with the pie? You stole my chicken pie. Give it back to me, or I'll have you hanged.

LEANFACE (*very humble and submissive, while shrinking before the stick*)
Your Lordship, they must have told you a lie. I never took your pie.

GAUTIER (*knocking him on the head repeatedly*)
Thief, wretch, bandit!

LEANFACE
Please, sir, let me go, and I'll get back your pie.

GAUTIER
You stole my pie, did you? You stole my pie? Where is it? What have you done with it?

LEANFACE
Kind sir, if you just allow me, I'll tell you the whole truth.

GAUTIER (*putting down the stick*)
Tell me, where is my pie?

LEANFACE
This is how it came about. When you left the house, my friend overheard you giving directions to your wife as to the messenger and the pie. My friend came and took the pie.

GAUTIER
Where is he? Where is the rascal?

LEANFACE
I know where he is, sir. If you'll only let me, I'll go and bring him back to you.

GAUTIER
With the pie?

LEANFACE
With the pie; yes, sir.

GAUTIER
Bring him along, then, and be quick. I'll have you hanged if you don't bring back that pie. Be off! (LEANFACE *goes toward the right.*) This town is full of thieves. (*He reënters the house.* WINDFED *comes forward to meet* LEANFACE.)

WINDFED
Well, where is the tart?

LEANFACE
Bad luck, old chap, she wouldn't give it to me.

WINDFED
She wouldn't. Why?

LEANFACE
She said she will give it only to the same messenger who came for the pie.

WINDFED
That's fair. I'll go and get it.

LEANFACE
Do! She will remember you. By the way, it is a wonderful tart. I had another look at it. It is the tartiest tart I ever saw. The sight of it almost overpowered me.

WINDFED
Don't get impatient, you'll taste it before long. By the way, I think I deserve an extra share for all this trouble.

LEANFACE
Go on. You'll have your extra share.

(*He goes out to the right.* WINDFED *knocks violently at the door.*)

WINDFED

Open quick. Your husband sends me for the tart. I am the messenger who came for the pie.

MARION (*opening the door and keeping a calm expression*)

Is it you again?

WINDFED

Yes, madam, Master Gautier wants the tart. He sent me for it.

MARION

Just a moment, I'll get it for you.

(*She disappears within the shop. While* WINDFED *has his back turned to the door,* GAUTIER *steps out with his stick and pounces upon him.*)

GAUTIER

Where is my pie?

WINDFED (*feigning utter ignorance*)

Your pie? I don't understand, sir.

GAUTIER

You don't understand? I'll explain it to you.

(*He knocks him vigorously with the stick.*)

WINDFED

Aye! Aye! Have mercy upon me!

GAUTIER

You understand now? What did you do with my pie?

WINDFED

Have pity, sir. Let me explain to you.

GAUTIER

Well, what have you to say?

WINDFED (*with great assurance*)

As you needed a man to take the pie to your friend, the beadle, I thought I would spare you the trouble of wait-

ing for a messenger. I presented myself to your wife with your proper directions. She gave me the pie, and in the hope of a little reward, I ran to Master Beadle.

GAUTIER (*somewhat skeptical*)
You took the pie to Master Beadle?

WINDFED
I did, sir.

GAUTIER
I didn't see you. You must have reached there before I came. Was he in?

WINDFED
Yes, sir; he was in.

GAUTIER
You lie. When I got there, there was no one in. I knocked and knocked, but no one opened. I had to come home without the dinner to which I was invited.

WINDFED
Excuse me, sir, Master Beadle asked me to tell you that he had postponed dinner for an hour. More guests were coming than he had expected. So he and his servant went out to buy more wine.

GAUTIER (*after a moment of reflection, as if a great mystery had been solved*)
Oh, I see! That is why I found nobody home.

WINDFED
Yes, sir; and Master Beadle begged me to ask you to send the tart also, as he feared he might be short of dessert.

GAUTIER
Why did you send the other man for it?

WINDFED
Well, sir, as I ran all the way there and back, I felt a little tired and I thought my friend would do the errand this time.

GAUTIER
Why didn't he tell me so? I am sorry I treated him harshly.

WINDFED
He does not mind it, sir; he is used to that.

GAUTIER
Now wait. I'll give you the tart to take to Master Beadle. It is not too late. But you must hurry. (*Both go in and return in a moment,* WINDFED *holding the tart.*) Take good care of it. Hurry up, and tell Master Beadle that I'll be there in time for dinner. Wait for me at his door, and I'll give you something for the errand.

WINDFED
Thank you, sir. I'll wait for you.
(GAUTIER *enters the house and shuts the door.* WINDFED *goes toward the right, holding the tart with both hands, his face buried in it. He is seen by* LEANFACE, *who comes toward him.*)

LEANFACE
What is that? Did you get the tart?

WINDFED
Yes, what did you get?

LEANFACE
I got the stick.

WINDFED
I got the stick and the tart.
(*He dips his face into the tart.*)

LEANFACE
Hold on! Let me have a bite, will you? It is not fair that you should eat it all.

WINDFED
I paid a fair price for it.

LEANFACE

So did I. Feel my head, it is all bruised. I think half of my brains have been spilled out.

WINDFED

You haven't much left, then.

LEANFACE

Anyhow, I feel much warmer after that thrashing, don't you? Tell me, how did you manage to get that tart?

WINDFED

This is no place to talk. Let us go off to a safer spot and give due honor to this honorable tart. Come along. (*They go out.* GAUTIER *comes out of the house.*)

GAUTIER

Well, my wife, I'm off again to the beadle's. This time for good. Don't expect me till late. I'll tell you all about it when I get back. Take good care of the shop. Good-by. By the way, in case we should run short of wine, I'll send a messenger with the same instructions as for the pie. Don't forget. He is to kiss your hand. Well, I must hurry on. Good-by.

(*As he is leaving, the two vagabonds may be seen at the opposite end of the stage waving a surreptitious good-by to him and showing by their mimicry that they intend to drink to his health.*)

CURTAIN

LEE THE VIRGINIAN

A Dramatic Portrait

by Fred Sterling

For
E. F.

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LEE THE VIRGINIAN

CHARACTERS

A Slave
Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee
Mrs. Lee
The Gentleman from Massachusetts
The Gentleman from Georgia
Miss Annie, Miss Agnes } Lee's *daughters*
Mrs. Randolph
Major General Winfield Scott
Town Crier
Ladies, Gentlemen, Citizens

Scene: *The Reception Room in the* Lee *home, Arlington Heights, Virginia. It is a large and commodious room furnished in the style of the period. A large table, flanked by heavy chairs, is in the center. At the rear are double glazed doors giving out on a roofed porch. To the left of these doors is an oil portrait of George Washington and, to the right, a portrait of General Henry, "Light Horse Harry," Lee. On the right a single door is the entrance to* Colonel Lee's *study and two doors on the left are entrances to the family's apartments.*

Time: Forenoon, April 18, 1861.

Author's Note. It is an historical fact that President Lincoln, through General Winfield Scott and the Hon. Francis Preston Blair, offered Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee command of the army that was to be placed in the field to force the seceding states back into the Union.

In preparing this portrait of the great Virginian I have secured my facts from the three following works: *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee,* by his son, Captain Robert E. Lee (New York, Doubleday, Page, 1924); *Lee the American,* by Gamaliel Bradford (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912); *Robert E. Lee, the Southerner,* by Thomas Nelson Page (New York, Scribner, 1908).

SLAVE (*opening double doors and bowing*)
Marse Robert, suh!

LEE (*gives his hat and cloak to* SLAVE)
Thanks, James.
(*He walks to the table and picks up the letters and messages. Without more than a cursory glance he tosses them back to the table and moves toward the door of his study. Before he reaches it a door on the left opens and* MRS. LEE *enters.* LEE *neither sees nor hears her entrance.*)

MRS. LEE
Robert!

LEE (*turning and going to her, takes her in his arms*)
My dear!

MRS. LEE
What is the news?

LEE
None from Richmond. They were still in session late last night and since early morning there have been no messages. You must not distress yourself, my dear.

MRS. LEE
But, Robert, I fear for you!

LEE
That you must not do; I forbid it. These are troublous times and no one knows what to expect.

MRS. LEE
Haven't you some idea, Robert?

LEE
No definite idea, save that whatever course Virginia takes, it will be an honorable one. You must be tired, my dear! (*He leads her to a chair.*) You must rest yourself.

MRS. LEE
I cannot rest while our happiness is at stake.

LEE

Duty must always come first.

MRS. LEE

Please talk to me, Robert, my mind is in a turmoil. Tell me, dear, what we can expect.

LEE

Almost anything. Two weeks ago Virginia elected to remain in the Union and I was inexpressibly happy. Since then Sumter has fallen and war has lifted its ugly head. Now Mr. Lincoln has called for seventy-five thousand volunteers and demands that Virginia supply eight thousand to force the seceding states back into the Union. I do not believe Virginia will consent to this levy of men. I am quite sure she will not permit them to be used for the purpose intended.

MRS. LEE

Will that mean secession?

LEE

I cannot answer that, my dear. We have sacred principles to maintain and rights to defend, for which we are duty bound to do our best, even if we perish in the endeavor.

(MISS ANNIE, MISS AGNES *and* MRS. RANDOLPH *enter from the left. They surround* COLONEL *and* MRS. LEE.)

LEE

My dears, and Mrs. Randolph.

MISS ANNIE

Father, all the boys are preparing for war. Is it true?

LEE

Youth is ever ready for conflict. I pray they may never see a battlefield.

MISS AGNES

Most of them insist that the war will be fought here in Virginia.

LEE
I am afraid they are right.

MRS. RANDOLPH
Colonel Lee, my husband, Lieutenant Randolph, cannot decide which side to join. He is a Northerner by birth but his entire sympathies are with the South.

LEE
How could he help it with such a beautiful bride? It is a time when each and everyone must decide for himself. I do not envy Lieutenant Randolph his position.

MRS. RANDOLPH
He looks so to you, Colonel Lee. What have you decided?

LEE
Madame, I can only repeat my father's words: "Virginia is my country, her will I obey, however lamentable the fate to which it must subject me." (*He bows low.*)

MRS. RANDOLPH
That means you are with the South?

LEE
Virginia must decide that. I do not, at this moment, know.

MISS ANNIE
Will Bob and Custis have to fight?

LEE
If war is declared no Lee will avoid service.

MISS AGNES
Everyone says you will lead the army, father.

LEE
I hope not. There are younger and more capable men to lead Virginia's troops. But, you must forgive me, there are several matters that claim my immediate attention. I will join you at lunch. (*He bows and turning*

to the table, gathers his letters and goes to his study. As the door closes behind him MRS. LEE *withdraws a letter from her bosom.*)

MRS. LEE

Listen, my dears, to this. It is a letter he wrote me before he left Texas. (*Reading.*) "The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the act of the North. I feel the aggression and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private interest. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions. But I can anticipate no greater calamity than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. Still a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the government disrupted, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people, and, save in defense, will draw my sword no more." I think that explains the Colonel's position. I know he has wept tears of blood. (*She wipes a tear from her eyes and gazes wistfully at the door through which* LEE *has left.*)

MRS. LEE (*continuing, after a pause*)

Lee! Lee, the Virginian! (*She rises from her chair.*) My dears, let's go and see what the April sun has done to our gardens. (*They leave by way of the French doors. For a moment the stage is empty. The figure of a man is seen through the French doors and a quiet knock is heard. The* SLAVE *enters from one of the doors on the left and admits* THE GENTLEMAN FROM GEORGIA.)

GEORGIA
Is Colonel Lee at home?

SLAVE
Yas, suh! He is in his study.

GEORGIA
Then do not disturb him. I'll wait until he is free.

SLAVE
Yas, suh!
(*Before the* SLAVE *can retreat to his station another man appears at the doors and there is another knock, louder and more commanding than the first. The* SLAVE *admits* THE GENTLEMAN FROM MASSACHUSETTS.)

MASSACHUSETTS (*importantly*)
Is Colonel Lee in?

SLAVE
Yas, suh! He is in his study.

MASSACHUSETTS
Well, give him my card.

SLAVE (*taking the card*)
Yas, suh!

GEORGIA
Hello, Senator! I'm glad to see you again. (*He offers his hand in greeting.*) The Colonel, I think, should not be disturbed.

MASSACHUSETTS
I'll decide that. (*To* SLAVE.) Take my card to Colonel Lee.
(SLAVE *bows and enters the study.*)

GEORGIA (*going toward* MASSACHUSETTS *with his hand still extended*)
I greet you, Senator!

MASSACHUSETTS (*ignoring the hand*)
Your state has rebelled. You are a rebel.

GEORGIA
I resent the term, sir, it is ungracious. I am a secessionist.

MASSACHUSETTS
You are no longer an American.

GEORGIA (*smiling*)
Have it your own way, sir. A Southerner, then.

MASSACHUSETTS
A rebel and nothing else.

GEORGIA (*bowing*)
Then, sir, as you are a guest on Southern soil the least we can expect is that you act the part of a guest.

MASSACHUSETTS (*building*)
Virginia is still a member of the Union!

GEORGIA
I doubt it. But as a former confrère of yours in the august body you so ably adorn, I greet you. May I ask if your visit is to be an extended one?

MASSACHUSETTS
Frankly, I am here to urge Colonel Lee to exert every effort to keep Virginia within the Union. And, may I enquire your business? A rebel—in a patriot's house?

GEORGIA
Colonel Lee, as you seem to realize, has great influence in this state. I am here, in an unofficial capacity to urge him to throw that influence on the side of the secessionists, to help Virginia join the new Union.

MASSACHUSETTS
There can be but one Union. That Union is headed by Mr. Lincoln.

GEORGIA
It was not a Union for domination but for strength. What the South elects to think and the manner in which

it chooses to act is not the concern of Massachusetts. It is no longer a question of slavery but of the rights of the Southern states to govern themselves.

MASSACHUSETTS

That is mere quibbling. You are fighting to perpetuate slavery.

GEORGIA

Quite the contrary, sir. It is more a matter of method and self-determination. The South realizes the fallacy and evils of slavery more than the self-righteous North. Are your people so dull, sir, that you cannot estimate the danger to our civilization in releasing more than two million blacks from bondage? Pray, are we to follow the demands of your leaders and offer them the vote? Are we to let these savages rule us?

MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. Lincoln, sir—

GEORGIA (*interrupting*)

Mr. Lincoln to the contrary. Virginia and the South are fully capable of deciding what is wrong and what is right. This everlasting meddling—

MASSACHUSETTS

As I was attempting to say when you interrupted me, Mr. Lincoln is prepared to recompense the Southern states for the freeing of the slaves.

GEORGIA

Sir, the North is populated by pinchpenny tradesmen. What can they know of the South and its problems? What else do they know save how many cents make a dollar? The South is not fighting to keep the blacks enslaved but for the right to decide how they shall be manumitted. (*Humorously.*) The North is willing to pay! As I said, the North knows nothing of honor, nothing but—cash value. If Virginia secedes, as it most certainly will, it will be to uphold its honor and integrity.

MASSACHUSETTS

But Virginia is not seceding.

GEORGIA

You do not know the temper of the South. What kind of people do you think we are? What kind of men would we be if we abjectly accepted the decrees of the aliens in the North?

MASSACHUSETTS

It is the will of the majority.

GEORGIA

The Chinese, I understand, far outnumber the whites. Are we to accept the will of the yellow man?

MASSACHUSETTS

We are concerned only with the problem of the freeing of the poor slaves and forcing the rebels back into the Union.

GEORGIA

Your plan, as I see it, is to free the blacks and enslave the whites.

MASSACHUSETTS

We are determined to put an end to slavery.

GEORGIA

I understand. You have made abolition your religion and the outlaw, John Brown, your sanctified high priest. You are convinced you are engaged in a holy war while in all truth it is merely an economic problem you are unable to solve.

MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. Lincoln is ready. He has offered you every opportunity, every method possible to release the slaves. The South has consistently refused. The President is now prepared to back up his demands with bayonets.

GEORGIA

And the South, sir, is prepared to defend its sacred rights with bayonets.

MASSACHUSETTS
Then it is war?

GEORGIA
War to the finish!

MASSACHUSETTS
The North has greater resources, more men, more money and supplies—

GEORGIA
The South has men and honor!

MASSACHUSETTS
It means defeat—

GEORGIA
Or dishonor. The South chooses to die rather than sacrifice its honor.

MASSACHUSETTS
A quixotic gesture.

GEORGIA
Only to a Northerner, sir.
(*They are silent for a moment.*)

GEORGIA (*resuming*)
There is no doubt in my mind that Virginia will secede. Back in 1799 the state passed a resolution to the effect that the several states being sovereign and independent have the unquestionable right to judge of the infractions of the Constitution, and that a nullification by those sovereignties of all unauthorized acts done under color of that instrument is the rightful remedy.

MASSACHUSETTS
The election of 1860 indicated that it was the will of the majority of the whole people that the slaves be freed.

GEORGIA
But, the South, as a whole, voted against Mr. Lincoln and his platform of abolition.

MASSACHUSETTS
And instead of accepting the will of the majority they have chosen to rebel.

GEORGIA
Rawle, in his Constitution, says "the right of secession must be considered an ingredient in the composition of the general government." And Rawle is an authority.

MASSACHUSETTS
An American can be loyal only to America.

GEORGIA
A man is loyal first to his family, then to the place he was born and then to the national government only insofar as that government deserves his loyalty.

MASSACHUSETTS
That is treason.

GEORGIA (*with dignity*)
I am a loyal son of Georgia, sir. If being loyal to that glorious state is treason then I am indeed a happy traitor. (*He bows low to* MASSACHUSETTS *as another knock is heard on the door.*)

GENERAL SCOTT (*entering*)
I wish to see the Colonel.

SLAVE
Yas, suh!
(LEE *at this moment enters the room with a sheaf of papers in his left hand. He sees* SCOTT *first and salutes.* MASSACHUSETTS *goes directly to him.*)

MASSACHUSETTS
Colonel Lee, I would like to have a few words with you in privacy.

LEE (*hospitably*)
I am afraid you will have to ask my superior officer's permission.

MASSACHUSETTS
But I am a senator, Colonel!

LEE
I, sir, am only a soldier.

MASSACHUSETTS (*importantly*)
I represent the Senate of the United States. If rank is being considered I believe I outrank any present!
(LEE *bows.*)

MASSACHUSETTS (*continuing*)
Colonel Lee, I have come from Washington on my own initiative to urge you to go on to Richmond. You have influence and the delegates to the convention will listen to what you have to say. Virginia must not be allowed to rebel.

LEE
Senator, I believe that the position of the two sections which they hold to each other was brought about by politicians of the country and that the great masses of the people, if they understood the real question, would avoid it. If forbearance and wisdom had their place there could be no conflict.

MASSACHUSETTS
If Virginia joins the rebels it will mean a long and bloody war.

LEE
That is quite true, sir. As far as I can judge Virginia is between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert us from both.

MASSACHUSETTS
Will you go to Richmond, sir?

LEE
I am not a politician; I am only a soldier. The men Virginia has chosen to determine its course are fully capable of meeting the problem before them. As a Vir-

ginian I must abide their decision. (*He turns and bows to* SCOTT.) General Scott?

SCOTT (*clearing his throat*)
Colonel Lee, I am here as Commander in Chief of the American Army. The President, Mr. Lincoln, has urged your appointment as commander of the armies that are to be placed in the field. My staff officers and I have concurred. I am here to offer you that command.
(LEE *squares his shoulders and bows. He turns slowly and goes to the French doors. After peering out for a minute, he turns to* SCOTT.)

LEE (*simply*)
I regret, sir, that I must decline the high honor you offer me. Although I am opposed to secession and deprecate war I can take no part in an invasion of the Southern States.

SCOTT
For thirty years you have carried the sword of the United States. You cannot, after such honorable service, decline to accept command of the Federal forces. You will not desert your flag and your allegiance in their hour of need?

LEE
I am compelled to decline. I cannot consult my own feelings in the matter.

SCOTT
It is a high honor you are rejecting.

LEE
I regret more than I can say, General, to separate myself from the service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed. Save in the defense of my state I never desire again to draw my sword.

SCOTT
You are still under orders, Colonel Lee.

LEE
I cannot recognize any authority which would compel me to invade my own Virginia.

SCOTT (*surlily*)
After accepting your education and support at the hands of the Federal government and sworn allegiance to it you are ready to break your military oath and betray your trust.

LEE
That is unfair, sir. I was sent into the service by Virginia and Virginia contributed to my education and support. The oath of allegiance has been broken, not by me, but by the Federal government which seeks to usurp the power that can belong only to Virginia.

(MRS. LEE, MISS ANNIE, MISS AGNES *and* MRS. RANDOLPH *enter from the porch.*)

MISS AGNES (*running to* LEE'S *arms*)
Father, father. The boys have already formed a company to be known as Lee's Legion, after Grandfather Harry's corps.

MISS ANNIE
They are drilling down on the river bank.

GEORGIA (*stepping forward*)
Colonel Lee, in behalf of the Provisional Government of the Confederacy I am delegated by Mr. Davis to offer you command of the Southern forces.

LEE, *as if about to speak, shakes his head.*

MRS. LEE
Oh, Robert dear, what—?

LEE (*going swiftly to her side*)
My dearest, until Virginia decides I can make no decision.

MASSACHUSETTS (*testily*)
Just what do you want, Colonel Lee?

LEE (*looking at him steadily, says in a quiet voice*)
All I ask is a Virginia farm, no end of cream, fresh butter and fried chicken.
(*Outside is heard the roll of a drum, shouting and cheering.*)

CROWD (*outside*)
Virginia secedes! Virginia secedes!

LEE (*going to the French doors, throws them open*)
Gentlemen, there is our answer.

CROWD
Virginia! Virginia! Virginia! (*A drum roll is heard below the porch.*)

TOWN CRIER
Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! The people of Virginia recognize the American principle, that government is founded on the consent of the governed, and the right of the people of the several states of this union for just cause to withdraw their association under the Federal government, with the people of other states, and to erect new governments for their better security; and they will never consent that the Federal power, which is in part their power, shall be exerted for the purpose of subjecting such states to the Federal Authority.

CROWD (*members of which have surged up the steps and on to the porch*)
'Rah for Virginia. Virginia! (*Over the cheering one voice rings out with commanding authority:*)
Virginians, to arms! (*A drummer beats the quickstep as the curtain slowly falls.*)

CURTAIN

A CHILD OF THE FRONTIER

by Elma E. Levinger

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"A Child of the Frontier," by Elma E. Levinger, was awarded first place in the national contest of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and recommended by their Committee on Literature for production in all its federated bodies.

A CHILD OF THE FRONTIER

CHARACTERS

AUNT SALLY, *the grannywoman*
NANCY, *a young mother*
KATE, AUNT SALLY'S *daughter*
NANCY'S NEW-BORN SON

TIME: *The early part of the nineteenth century.*

PLACE: *The undeveloped western territory.*

The room is the only one in the log dwelling; there is a single uncurtained window in the rear wall with greased paper for a pane; on the door, a little to the right of it, hangs a deerskin. A huge fireplace formed by the chimney-nook is in the right wall; above it a few pans, several pots and a skillet, between the fireplace and back wall a spinning wheel. Before the window, also before the low-burning fire, two three-legged stools; in the angle made by the left corner, a bedstead made of poles stuck between the logs, the "foot" supported by a crotched stick driven into the dirt floor. Along the left wall a table made from a huge hewn log standing on four legs; on one corner a few tin and pewter dishes.

Above the fire on a sort of crane hangs a huge black kettle. It is steaming and the WOMAN *standing before it prods the white clothes hanging from it with a long stick. She wears a skirt of deerskin, a worn knit shawl and soft*

NOTE TO THE PRODUCER. Under no circumstances should the advance publicity or the program contain a hint that the play is woven about the birth of Lincoln, otherwise the dramatic surprise at the end would be destroyed.

moccasin-like shoes, made of skin. Her scant hair is just touched with gray. Her bowed shoulders are turned to the audience. She sings, as she works, that old hymn of Watts, with the weird intonations one often catches in the voice of the lonely woman of the farm or mountains. The curtain rises after the first four lines.

AUNT SALLY

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

(*Her voice dies away; she gives an extra vicious punch with her stick. The figure lying beneath the faded pink "kiverlid" across the bed stirs.*)

VOICE FROM THE BED

Aunt Sally!

(AUNT SALLY *turns and goes toward the bed with a shuffling tread. Her hard life has left her face stern and rugged, her eyes are dull. When she speaks it is in the peculiar lifeless tone of the woman who seldom hears human speech.*)

AUNT SALLY

Had a good sleep?

(*She raises the patient a trifle upon the pillow.* NANCY *is a beautiful woman of about twenty-six. Although still*

pale and worn from her ordeal she has such radiant eyes that she seems almost vigorous; her long black hair falls in confusion over her coarse gown. Her voice, in its low refinement, is in great contrast with AUNT SALLY'S *slovenly speech.*)

NANCY

Yes. (*Glancing toward the door.*) Hasn't my man come back yet?

AUNT SALLY

No. Snow's powerful deep. He's been down working on Hodgin's barn, ain't he?

NANCY

Maybe it was just as good he was away when the baby came—you don't need a man around then.

AUNT SALLY

I've been grannywoman for nigh twenty years; I brought so many babies I've 'bout lost track of 'em. I know what I'm saying. If men had to do the child bearing, the human race would go out quick—like a candle! They play jokes at weddings, a-carrying on and a-racing for the whisky bottle. But they ain't crying like the bride and her kin. The women folks know what she's got to look forward to. We know why we cry.

NANCY

I wouldn't have cried if I'd known I was going to have two lovely children so soon. (*Looking about a trifle anxiously.*) Where's my little Sarah?

AUNT SALLY

I sent her over yonder to stay with daughter Kate to have her out the way. (*Leaning over bed and picking up baby, wrapped in an old blanket.*) Lord, he's a spindly little thing, ain't he? An awfully unpromising baby.

NANCY

Give him a chance to grow, Aunt Sally. By the time he's a day old he'll be right handsome.

AUNT SALLY (*doubtfully*)

Maybe. But I was a grannywoman before you was born, and I've tended 'most every woman in the county these last twenty years or so. I know a weak baby when I sees one. Sometimes when you can't get 'em started breathing at first, them mites don't never live long. Reckon their hearts don't work right or something.

NANCY (*holding out her arms for the baby*)

You don't think—

AUNT SALLY (*putting the bundle in her arms*)

I don't know much for certain, and I've nursed plenty of babies in my time. Anyhow, the good Lord sends 'em fast—and He takes 'em fast when He's a mind to. We folks ain't got nothing to say about it. (*Walks toward the kettle.*) Guess I'll get the clothes wrung.

NANCY

I just can't 'bide still and see you working so hard for me, Aunty.

AUNT SALLY

I'd feel right queer if I wasn't working. I was washing clothes for my own mother when my baby sister was born, and me no more'n eight years old. And I've been working ever since. Like my mother. She didn't age much after she got 'round sixty—she just kept on getting more tired. (*Begins to hang clothes on line in front of fire.*) Can't hang 'em out—they'd freeze.

NANCY

It's the bad weather that makes my man slow getting home. (*With almost childish impatience.*) I want to show him the baby!

AUNT SALLY (*dryly*)

Guess he'll have plenty of chance to see him, 'specially when he gets big enough to be under his pa's feet all the time.

(*The door opens and* KATE *enters, a basket on one arm.*

She is about thirty, tall and full-bosomed, with great discontented eyes. Her shining black hair is wet with snow. Her voice is brusque, her manner sullen. She is dressed in a rough skin skirt and knitted kittle with a shaggy fur coat she throws off as she enters.)

KATE

Think I was never coming, ma? (*With a nod toward the bed.*) How's the new baby, Nan?

(*She goes to table, takes bread and cakes from her basket. Now she comes to the bed for a look at the baby.*)

NANCY

How's my little Sarah?

KATE (*snapping*)

Crying to come home. What can you expect of a young one two years old! Pity you couldn't have rested a spell 'fore the second one come.

NANCY

I'm powerful glad to get him, Kate!

KATE (*drawing the stool closer to fire and spreading out her wet skirt to dry*)

You just wait, Nancy, till you're married twelve years like me instead of just three. Wait till you get five babies in a row, and one of 'em so crippled up you're almost ashamed of him yourself. You wait!

NANCY

You'll have an easier time when the babies get a little older.

AUNT SALLY (*back at her washing*)

When the babies gets older, her troubles'll just begin. Like mine. She talks about having five children. Women nowadays are scairt of hurting themselves and want to take life easy. (*With simple pride.*) I had twelve—four of 'em living yet. I thought when they was little babies was the hard time. Up 'fore dawn to give 'em suck and

all day washing and fretting for 'em and up with 'em half the night. I thought it was hard then. But them was the easy times. Now Kate's the only one that's a mite of comfort to me; the boys running wild and you know what my 'Liza done. It ain't right we've got to go through as much with children and get nothing back for it. But what are we going to do about it?

KATE

Nothing. (*Turns to* NANCY *almost fiercely.*) Three years ago you had the grandest wedding for miles around. And now he won't never keep a roof over your head for a year straight. A smart girl like you slaving and carrying in wood just like the rest of us till your time was on you! (*To her mother.*) I told you so, ma, when the teacher fellow stayed down the Hollow and you wanted me to go to him with Georgie and learn reading and writing. It don't pay to get learning. Nancy here's got it—she can read and write and everything—and what's it brought her?

NANCY

I'm glad I know a little. I can learn the children something when they're older, 'specially the boy. I'm not complaining about my man. He's a steady worker—most of the time—and he don't drink over-much generally. But I want this baby to go ahead of his father. His daddy can't do more'n write his name, and I had to teach him that much. But my baby's going to have learning. He's going to be a lawyer, maybe, and if he gets enough learning, he might even get sent to the legislature.

KATE

That's likely! Such goings on don't happen to this neighborhood.

NANCY (*with pretty earnestness*)

You can't always say. Maybe he'll grow up like my aunt's cousin and be a preacher.

KATE (*scornfully*)

Like Elder Cameron! He's in the saddle on the circuit till he's ready to drop. He's lucky at the end of the year if he gets enough potatoes and corn meal for his wife and children, and, maybe, fifty dollars—if he can collect it. And you can't expect your boy to grow up a regular sort of preacher, can you?

NANCY (*wistfully*)

Don't you ever imagine lovely things are going to happen to your babies, Kate?

KATE (*shortly*)

No—'cause nothing good ain't never going to happen to me and mine. Suppose I made out my lame Jake was going to grow up a president or a general or something? That wouldn't make his crooked back straight, would it?

NANCY

No. But when I look at a little baby—even if it isn't my own—I can't help making plans. The babies have just come straight from God—they're still mighty nigh to Him. And when you look at them, you don't know what God wants them to be when they're grown up. If that woman who kept the inn had known Christ was going to be born that night, she wouldn't have turned Mary away. She'd given her the best room in the house and made a fire in the stove instead of sending her to the stable. Maybe that woman never knew the Savior was born in her barn; she looked at Him and He looked just like any other mite of a baby. But we've got no way of knowing—we can't dream far enough ahead.

KATE (*mystified, therefore irritated*)

That sort of talk don't mean nothing at all in the world to me. I never got religion.

NANCY (*half-laughing at her own boldness*)

You're going to laugh at me, Kate, but when I lay here last night, kinda cold and my troubles beginning, I kept

thinking of what that circuit preacher said down at church last year—remember?

KATE (*shortly, rising to hang up a piece of wash her mother has overlooked*)
I don't take no stock in preachers, neither.
(*Sits down again, her back toward* NANCY, *while* AUNT SALLY *shuffles to table and putters among the dishes a moment before listening to* NANCY *with pathetic interest.*)

NANCY (*musingly*)
He told so beautiful about Mary the mother of Jesus lying in a bare stable—not much better than this place, I reckon —with the wind blowing—and maybe snow, if they have snow in those far countries—and the winter stars shining through the holes in the roof—and the little baby sleeping warm and quiet beside her in the manger. A little baby —like mine! (*She holds the little bundle close to her heart, and it is a few minutes before she can continue.*) Mary knew beforehand from the angel He was going to save the whole world; but maybe before the rich kings got there with their presents, she didn't think much about it. His father was a carpenter like my man, and she wasn't thinking her baby would be a prince. She just thought He would be a good man, and some day everybody would love Him. Maybe He was just a weak, unpromising baby like mine, but she expected great things of Him. When we're young girls, I reckon we're all foolish and think we'll amount to something when we grow up. I know I did, with my learning and being the best spinner in the county and everything. And when the baby comes, you don't stop dreaming—but your dreams change. You feel just like Mary did with her baby in the manger. You dream there's a prince sleeping on your breast, and you dream of him doing all the things you thought you was going to do yourself.

AUNT SALLY (*wiping her eyes*)
You do talk just beautiful, Nan. Better than the preacher did.

KATE (*touched but scornful*)
It ain't hard to make grand plans while you're laying there on your back. Wait till he gets falling into the crick in summer and shooting himself up with his pa's shotgun. Maybe he won't be even healthy.

AUNT SALLY (*with another professional look at the baby*)
He looks mighty unpromising now. I've been granny-woman for everybody in this county for years and years, and I ought to know a trifling baby when I sees one. He was so sort of blue at first—them kind never lives long.

NANCY (*pluckily*)
My aunt's sister back in Virginia had a little boy who was like that, and he's living yet.

KATE
Humph—back in Virginia where your kin come from must have been 'bout the same as here: the only crop that never failed was babies. But it must be like playing to raise a family in them parts. Back in Virginia don't some folks live in a grand brick house just like a church? And have niggers to do their dirty work for 'em? That ain't like having children out here in the wilderness.

AUNT SALLY (*nodding*)
Kate's right! I been grannywoman in this county nigh to twenty years, and I've seen women lying in open-front shacks with the snow drifting in. I stood there wondering if I ought to wrap the mother or the naked baby in the only blanket they got. (*Simply, for it is an old story with her.*) And once when I come back, I found the new baby and the other two children and their ma all laying there in their blood . . . Indians! Their pa was up the river a-trading. (*Shrugging it away.*) Life ain't easy here like back in Virginia.

KATE (*savagely*)

Easy! I ain't got no life of my own any more. Once or twice a year maybe I get away from home when there's a burying or a wedding. Or ride to the preaching with a baby perched up in front of me on the saddle—and another one strapped behind. And all the work ain't so bitter as the pains when they come—(*suddenly her hard face contracts with agony*)—but it ain't nothing like the pain they gives you when they die.

NANCY (*holding her own baby closer*)

Don't, Kate— It always hurts you to talk about it.

KATE (*sweeping on*)

One of them got hurt when I was hoeing corn and not looking after him right—the other died of milk-sickness. I had to let him lay, 'cause all the others was sick of it, too, and I didn't have hands enough. He'd cry to me for water, and I was too busy to fetch it to him. (*Wildly.*) Sometimes on still nights I hear him crying—and crying —and crying—and I can't never go to him now.

AUNT SALLY (*from her seat at foot of bed*)

Don't take on so, Kate. Us women all have gone through all them things, Kate. That's all done and finished.

KATE

The healthy ones that might have been some comfort to me died, but I've still got Jake with his crooked back, and his own father not wanting to feed him. Don't you go telling me the Lord knows His business. When babies come so weak and puny they don't amount to much, we ought to just let 'em die off so we can look after the strong ones better.

NANCY (*with her first spark of anger*)

You haven't any right to talk wicked like that.

KATE (*sullenly*)

It ain't me that's wicked. We women don't get treated right but—(*rising with a shrug*)—it don't do no good talk-

ing about it. (*Going back toward bed.*) And I ain't seen the new baby since last night. (*Leaning over the young mother, tender in spite of herself.*) What're you going to name him?

NANCY (*busy pulling the blanket down from baby's face*)
I reckon— (*With a scream of terror.*) What's the matter with him? Aunt Sally—look!

AUNT SALLY (*taking child from her quickly*)
It looks like spasms—and bad.

NANCY (*frantic*)
That's what killed Anna's baby. What do you do for it? Do something—quick!

AUNT SALLY (*reflectively*)
There's that woman down by the crossroads they say can cure a child just by touching it—and she's got all kinds of herbs—

KATE
We can't wait so long—

NANCY (*turns to* AUNT SALLY, *wringing her hands in her helplessness*)
But *you* do something—

AUNT SALLY
There ain't much you do with spasms—

NANCY
You cured Abbie's little girl—

AUNT SALLY (*her slow-moving brain groping toward the light*)
Abbie's young one was older—and healthy.

NANCY
But do something—!

AUNT SALLY
I reckon I got her out of it by putting her in hot water—It sort of loosened her and— (*Thrusting her hand in*

kettle.) The water's still hot in here. (*Turning to* KATE, *and going to fireplace with baby.*) Don't wait to take off its clothes—help me hold his head, Kate.

NANCY (*crying out in her agony*)
Let me help you—

AUNT SALLY (*with a curious look for her daughter, who has not moved*)
What are you waiting for, Kate? Help me hold him. You know my hands ain't none too steady no more.

KATE (*very low*)
Maybe we— (*Looks toward* NANCY, *with her head buried in the pillows and breaks off half-ashamed.*) What's the use of fussing over a baby like that?

AUNT SALLY (*in a horrified whisper*)
Are you crazy, Kate? You ain't going to let a little baby die?

KATE
It's better off dead, an unpromising baby like him. Maybe he won't be no better'n my lame Jake, when he's growed. Maybe he won't be able to fend for himself.

AUNT SALLY (*busy removing the blanket*)
You got to help me, Kate, and rub life in him when we get him out the water. I've been a grannywoman for nigh twenty years, and I ain't ever give a baby up yet—and I ain't going to now.

KATE (*a world of concentrated bitterness in her low voice*)
If you'd thrown a blanket over my Jake's face when he was born, nobody'd be the wiser, and his crooked back wouldn't be breaking my heart every day of my life.

AUNT SALLY
I acted for the best. And now we got to do our best for them—(*nodding toward the bed*)—they're neighbors.

KATE (*bitterly*)
Then let it die. They're better off without another mouth to feed.

AUNT SALLY (*bending over tub*)
You come right here and help me, Kate. She ain't going to lose her baby if I can help it.

NANCY (*through her sobbing*)
Is he—gone? God, don't let him die—he's too little to die and go 'way off in the dark alone—let me take care of him for a while.

KATE (*squaring her shoulders and going to her mother*)
Let me hold his head—do you aim to drown him? (*Bends over kettle.*) Why don't you keep splashing him like you did Abbie's child?

NANCY
God—take me—
(*Hides her face again.*)

AUNT SALLY
Better take him out, Kate. I don't know if it did no good or not. Now we'll strip him and rub him good and wrap him in a hot blanket.
(KATE *sits on stool before fire, while her mother kneels beside her undressing the child in her lap.*)

NANCY (*in a stifled voice*)
Is he— (*She cannot bring herself to say "dead." How does he look now?*

KATE
Better.

NANCY
Are you sure you're doing all you can for my baby, Kate?

KATE (*harsh suspicion in her voice as she continues rubbing*)
What do you mean?

NANCY
You were so slow at first—and you know what you said about weak babies—
(*Stops, confused.*)

KATE (*affecting indifference*)
What are you talking about?

NANCY (*hysterically*)
You said folks ought to let weak little babies die—but you didn't mean it, Kate—say you didn't mean it!

KATE
Yes—I meant it.

NANCY (*frantic*)
Then you're not trying to help him! You're going to let him die.
(*She half rises and* AUNT SALLY *hurries toward her.*)

AUNT SALLY
Nancy! You're too weak—

KATE (*contemptuously*)
You don't need to be afraid for me, Nancy. I meant every word I said, but I'm like the rest of us women folks. I just talk. Talk and don't do nothing. I ain't going to let it die. If I can help it. I don't want you to lay crying for him in the night like I do sometimes.

NANCY (*half to herself*)
I was going to do so much for him! I'd been dreaming and hoping—

KATE (*wraps the child in blanket*)
I reckon you can keep on hoping for a while yet, Nan. And dreaming foolish. He don't look so bad now, does he, ma?

AUNT SALLY (*picking up child*)
No. Course, the danger ain't over yet. They sometimes gets them spasms quick in succession, and you can't always

do anything with 'em no matter what you try. But just keep him warm—

KATE (*briskly*)
Whisky's good for convulsions—

AUNT SALLY (*reflectively*)
Whisky helps nigh most everything—snake bite and heat stroke and drowning. It won't hurt a mite to try it. (*Looking down at child.*) Well, if the heat and rubbing ain't got him to sleep! Don't bother him with nothing now. (*Puts the bundle into* NANCY'S *eager arms.*) Poor little lamb! Keep him good and warm and don't give him his suck for a spell—if you can help it. Of course, if he wakes and squawks for it— (*She makes a hopeless gesture.*) You just got to humor young ones when they're sick.

NANCY (*bending over child*)
Are you sure he'll get well, Aunty?

AUNT SALLY
You can't never be sure of nothing. (*Going to table.*) I'll just fix you up some gruel, and then I'll go home for a spell. If you need me again, just send over quick, and I'll do what I can.
(*She begins to prepare the gruel.* KATE *takes her cloak from the wall and puts it on.*)

KATE (*near door*)
Good-by, Nancy. I'll be in early to-morrow.

NANCY (*tearfully*)
I'll never get through thanking you and your mother for what you did for me to-day, Kate.

KATE (*roughly*)
Maybe some day you won't want to! (*She goes to bed.*) You had a close call that time, Nan. (*Almost tenderly for her.*) Maybe you won't never have to know how it feels to have a piece of your body buried out in the for-

est—and snow and rain beating on a grave that's so little you can't always find it right away. (*As* NANCY *shudders and hides her face, she pats her shoulder.*) Now—now—it's going to be all right, I reckon. And you can go on making believe he's going to be a prince or something big when he grows up.

NANCY (*rapt*)
I almost lost him—like Mary came nigh to losing the baby Jesus when Herod's soldiers killed all the other children. But she escaped with hers and ran off to Egypt. (*In an awe-struck whisper.*) God couldn't let my baby die, either— He saved him to do great things in the world.

KATE (*laughing indulgently*)
You can thank God, if you want to, Nancy. But I think my own ma had something to do with saving that baby of yourn. (*With one of her rare looks of affection which causes* AUNT SALLY *to straighten up considerably for a moment.*) My ma ain't got learning, but a grannywoman like her knows a sight more about sickness than them new-fangled doctors with their medicine cases.

NANCY
I sure am grateful, Aunt Sally, and when the baby grows up, he'll thank you, too.

AUNT SALLY (*slumping again and going back to her cooking with her old air of dejection*)
I don't expect no gratitude from children. I helped bring an army of 'em in the world, and not one of 'em ever thanked me yet.

KATE (*opening door*)
Why, there's Tom coming up the road—taking his time about it after all the trouble and excitement we been having. (*Calling through open door.*) Hi there, Tom Lincoln! Can't you hurry for once in your life? You've got a boy.

AUNT SALLY (*shuffling to the door*)
I'm aching to see Tom Lincoln's grin when he sees the little fellow.

KATE (*walks back to bed*)
With all that to do, Nancy, you never got to tell me what you're aiming to call that there baby.

NANCY (*fondling child*)
I always did like the name of Abe. And I know it'll please my man, too. I'm aiming to call him after his granddaddy, Abraham Lincoln.

CURTAIN

YOUNG WASHINGTON AT MT. VERNON

A Dramatic Action in a Prologue and Three Scenes

by Percy Mackaye

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PREFACE

The Dramatic Action here printed is an excerpt only of my complete Ballad Play, in three acts and a prologue, "Washington: The Man Who Made Us," published by Alfred A. Knopf, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York; and this excerpt comprises the main portion of the first act of that three-act play. A note to this effect should be printed, at the head of the Cast of Characters, in all amateur performances given of this Action; and the author requests that two copies of the program be sent, with press notices, to him at his address, Harvard Club, New York City.

On Washington's Birthday, 1920, under auspices of the George Washington Memorial Society, the first performance of my complete play, in its Theatre Version, was given by Mr. Walter Hampden and his company at the Belasco Theatre, Washington, D. C., before members of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Cabinet, the play opening in New York on March 1st for a run at the Lyric Theatre, with the scenic production of Mr. Robert Edmond Jones.

By the public in many parts of America Mr. Hampden's distinguished acting in the title rôles of "The Servant in the House," "Cyrano de Bergerac," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and as Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice," has been welcomed as comparable to the noblest traditions of his profession; and the abounding gifts of Mr. Jones as an artist of the theatre have been notably recognized in his scenic productions of "Redemption," "The Jest," "Caliban," "The Birthday of the Infanta," and the plays of Mr. Eugene O'Neill.

For the setting of "Young Washington at Mt. Vernon" Mr. Jones has designed the scenic background represented

in the Frontispiece, slightly adapted from the actual architecture of Washington's home, still standing at Mt. Vernon.

Washington's love of his home and kindred, his farm and his Virginian neighbors, has been somewhat obscured by his eminence as a military leader and hero. In the present three scenes, laid at his home in his youth and young manhood, I have sought to characterize dramatically his less heralded, more intimate relationships with his home circle, in sketches of his elder brother, his mother, his farm helpers and next door neighbors—with known and historical figures of his Mt. Vernon environment. Intermingling with these, the ballad-singing characters of Quilloquon and the two children represent symbolically the folk-spirit of America and posterity.

The music and words of the ballad introductory to this Action ("The Raggle Taggle Gypsies"), as well as the other ballads with music included in the complete three-act Ballad-play, with illustrations by Arvia MacKaye, are published by the H. W. Gray Company, publishers of music, 159 East 48th St., New York, and may be obtained through Samuel French.

My complete play, "Washington," from which this Action is taken, I began to write at Washington, D. C., in December, 1917, and completed at Shirley Centre, Massachusetts, on July 4th, 1918. Though it had long been partially projected in my mind, yet the human meanings illumined by our entrance into the Great War, and the world relationships implied by that vast decision, were compelling incentives for me to undertake and bring the play to completion, setting during that time all other matters aside.

To-day, George Washington—dead—is for most people a figure remote, statuesque, dignified, cold, almost mythical; one to be revered, but not warmly loved. But in his own day—alive—he was a magnetic human being, passionate, patient, resourceful—a rugged personality, lovable and greatly beloved.

It has been, then, my aim in this Dramatic Action so to portray him in his youth and early prime, with truth to reality, that we of America to-day may be led to feel a more intimate affection for "the man who made us."

YOUNG WASHINGTON AT MT. VERNON

SCENE I: THE LAD AND THE SOIL.
First Transition: Fighting Frontiersman.
SCENE II: "A BIG ACRE TO GARDEN."
Second Transition: "Old Virgin-ee-ay."
SCENE III: HOME AND PEACE.

CHARACTERS AND SCENES

PROLOGUE

BALLAD: *"The Golden Libertee"*
QUILLOQUON—*sings, to dulcimer*
CHILDREN—*join in refrain*
MELODY: *"America"*
QUILLOQUON—*plays fiddle*
CHILDREN—*mute*

SCENE I

SCENE: *Washington's home at Mt. Vernon, Virginia.*
TIME: *About* 1750.

QUILLOQUON
THE TWO CHILDREN
LORD FAIRFAX
LAWRENCE WASHINGTON
MAMMY SAL
JACOB VAN BRAMM
ADJUTANT MUSE
MARY WASHINGTON
GEORGE WASHINGTON

FIRST TRANSITION

Piping of Frogs
QUILLOQUON—*plays flute*
BALLAD: *"Bangry Rewy"*
QUILLOQUON—*sings, to fifing*

SCENE II

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *About* 1756.

QUILLOQUON	NEGROES
SALLY FAIRFAX	CAPTAIN JOHN POSEY
ANN SPEARING	COLONEL GEORGE WASHINGTON
ELIZABETH DENT	ZEKIEL
BISHOP	GEORGE FAIRFAX
HUMPHREY KNIGHT	A COLONIAL OFFICER
WILLIAM POOLE	

SECOND TRANSITION

MELODY: *"Bangry Rewy"*
QUILLOQUON—*plays fiddle*
PLANTATION SONG: *"Oh, whar'll I lay my heart down?"*
VOICES OF NEGROES:—*sing, to thrumming*

SCENE III

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *May,* 1758.

MAMMY SAL	COLONEL GEORGE WASKINGTON
ZEKIEL	PATTY CUSTIS
WEDDING GUESTS	JACK CUSTIS
CAPTAIN JOHN POSEY	THE TWO CHILDREN
MARTHA WASHINGTON	A FIDDLER—QUILLOQUON

PROLOGUE

The stage is shut off from the audience by plain blue curtains, closed where they meet at the center.

From behind the curtains is heard the thrumming of a stringed instrument, to which a man's voice begins to sing, in simple ballad fashion, joined in the refrain of each couplet by the voices of children, a girl and a boy. Near

the beginning of the ballad song the curtains part, disclosing QUILLOQUON *and the children seated, in broad sunshine, on a long, low doorstep, beside the door of a grey-white, wide-clapboarded house.*

QUILLOQUON *is clad in old-time garb. Under an old felt hat, wisps of his long hair fall about his weather-browned face, neither young nor old, but wrinkled with lines of kindly shrewdness and good cheer. Slung at his side is a flute, on his back a fiddle, in his hands a dulcimer.*

One end of the house only is visible, with a lower and an upper window, the green blinds open. On the right, this end of the house is connected by an arched, roofed colonnade (curving the center background) with the end of a kitchen, correspondingly visible—with doorway and windows—on the left. Between the door and lower window is a bench. Within the colonnade another passage leads, left, into the kitchen—its doorway unseen.

The colonnade consists of double arches, with columns spaced and proportioned with noble simplicity and charm. Under its arches the eye looks away toward low, wooded hills and the placid blue bend of a river, panelled by the white columns.

A broad road-path skirts the buildings and colonnade as far as the house doorstep, and defines by its curves a patch of lawn in the foreground.

Seated on the ground, on either side of QUILLOQUON, THE LITTLE GIRL *and* BOY *gaze up at him and listen to his singing, joining in the refrain of the ancient melody.*

QUILLOQUON (*sings*)

There was a little ship in the North Amerikee,
She went by the name of the *Golden Libertee,*
As she sailed in the Low-de-lands low.

O, red red was the dawn-shine that spangled in her spars,
And blue was her wave-line beneath the morning stars,
As she sailed in the Low-de-lands low.

O, richer than the Indies the cargo that she bore
Agliding up the stream by the sweet Potomeek's shore,
As she sailed in the Low-de-lands low.

Her cargo was of hearts, heaped as high as she could hold,
Of men's hearts and women's hearts, more wonderful than gold,
As she sailed in the Low-de-lands low.

The red red hearts were burning her golden decks aboard;
Her Captain he was standing where cloudy eagles soared,
As she sailed in the Low-de-lands low.

The hearts they sang, the stars sang: "O Captain of the Free,
You have brought us through the tempest in our *Golden Libertee,*
As she sails in the Low-de-lands low."

SCENE I

(About 1750)

The persons who enter are TWO MEN—*both in garb of the middle eighteenth century.*

One, in bright scarlet riding-habit, is an alert short-sighted gentleman of about sixty, ruddy and urbane.

The other, A YOUNGER MAN *of about thirty—quiet-moving, large-framed, slightly stooped, his strong face pale—is clad in working clothes over which he wears the cloak of a Colonial major. Occasionally he pauses, to check a slight coughing.*

THE ELDER MAN *speaks with gusto, twining his riding whip with a sprig of ivy.*

THE ELDER MAN

Ha, Lawrence, this April—heigh?—and young sap! Who wouldn't be alive, to go a-hunting? A clear horn and

your horse limber, a live pack and the red devil for a fox —why, here's old England even in your new world wilderness. Tom Fairfax never felt more at home in Yorkshire.

LAWRENCE

Your lordship is always welcome at Mt. Vernon. I wish only a bad lung didn't keep me from the hunt.

LORD FAIRFAX

Clever hounds, yours, Major Washington, clever hounds! Throats chimed like bells in a belfry! Sir Roger de Coverley's weren't tuned more nice. But my beagles are quicker at the scent.

LAWRENCE

Have you rid far, Sir, today?

FAIRFAX

A good turn. I'll lay 'twas twenty miles around before we run down old Reynard at Dogue's Creek. How I wish George had been along! He's the blue-ribbon lad in the saddle: a Virginian centaur! Aye, Sir, Master Addison could have drawn a pretty mythological portrait of George —the young centaur of Lost Atlantis! Damme, Major; I miss your brother.

LAWRENCE

We all do. He's been gone a month now, surveying your lordship's frontier lands.

FAIRFAX

One month?—one? It seems a dozen. I miss the boy. Ever since I've neighboured you at Belvoir, he and I— we've been old dog and pup.

LAWRENCE (*smiling*)

You have watched the pup grow to match his paws, my lord.

FAIRFAX

Aye, 'tis a big thoroughbred! Sun-up and moon-down, indoors and out, books and brooks, we've trailed it to-

gether. Now he's gone, I'm clean off my feed. Ah, but, Lawrence, I can never tell thee how deep it grips me—the wonder of him. For me, he's your new world—the bigness of it, the young vigour, the large quiet, the bright far look-off towards an immense tomorrow. George: my young George Washington! What's he to do, eh? What's he to become?

LAWRENCE

That's on my own mind, Sir, constantly. Indeed, we've been holding a family council on George's career. Since he makes his home now with me, his mother has come over from her farm, to confer about it.

FAIRFAX (*starting*)

Madame Washington—here?

LAWRENCE

She arrived this morning. I wish your lordship would join us with your advice.

FAIRFAX

Advice? Now, now, Lawrence! I'm a daring man—but no Daniel! I was once presented to Queen Anne: I durst offer advice to the Majesty of England—but not to George's mother.

LAWRENCE (*smiling*)

For so quiet a person, she knows her own will, Sir.

FAIRFAX

Say, rather, the will of the elements. Madame Washington is more than a person—she is a presence. Hers is the majesty of Nature, to which mere man must bow. So as for giving family advice—

LAWRENCE (*laughing, takes* FAIRFAX'S *arm*)

Well, Sir, stay the night with us, anyway.

(*They go up the steps to the house door.* LORD FAIRFAX *enters the house, followed by* LAWRENCE—*his laughter constrained by coughing.*)

(*From the side door of the kitchen appears now a bright-turbaned* NEGRESS, *bringing a copper kettle and a small wooden box. She is followed down the steps by two half-naked little black children, whom she chases in again.*)

THE NEGRESS

Heah! Run 'long back, yo' chilluns; run 'long in, now. (*Meanwhile, through the colonnade, from the right, have entered two picturesque persons, semi-military in appearance. One is a big, raw-boned figure, a man of about forty, out at knee and elbow; he is comfortably drunk, and carries in one hand a small wooden coop, in which is a game-cock; when he talks, his speech has the broad drawl of a native backwoodsman. The other—older, stocky, and Dutch-featured—carries two broadswords, which he fondles with visible affection. He enters, speaking with heated affirmation.*)

THE DUTCHMAN

No, tamn it, Master Adjutant Muse, game-cocks is no gentlemans' substitutes for proadswords. My tisciplines here is for to learn Master George Vashington—proadswords. And your tisciplines, Sir, is for to learn him his military manuals.

MUSE (*saluting, bows very low*)

Cap'n Van Bramm—your mos' obedient! Come along, then, and have some rum punch. (*Backing toward the inner kitchen door, he stumbles against the* NEGRESS.) Kep' it hot, eh, Mammy Sal?

MAMMY SAL

Waitin' right inside, Marse Muse, ri'chover by de chimbley.

MUSE

All right, Jacob: ain't that Dutch treat 'nough for gentry?

VAN BRAMM

Aye, Sir: rum punch is tamn all right Tutch. (*They go into the kitchen.*)

(*Outside,* MAMMY SAL *squats on the ground and begins leisurely to clean and burnish the copper kettle with fine sand from the box. Along the path, left, enters quietly a* WOMAN *of quaint stateliness, elderly and alert. Of middle height, with features pleasing but strongly marked, she is dressed plainly in short skirt, sack and mob-cap. From one of her great side-pockets protrude knitting needles and yarn. In one hand she carries a garden rake. When she speaks, her low voice is musical in its cadence, absolute in its command.*)

THE WOMAN
Mammy Sal!

MAMMY SAL (*jumping up*)
Howdy evenin', Missy Washin'n!

MARY WASHINGTON
Has my son, Master George, come home yet?

MAMMY SAL
No'm, Missy Washin'n—not him.

MARY WASHINGTON
I have been taking a turn round the buildings. Who left this rake in the dairy?

MAMMY SAL
De Lo'd he know-all, Missy Washin'n.

MARY WASHINGTON (*handing the rake*)
Take it to the tool house. Wait. (*Pulling from one of her pockets two strips of colored cloth.*) Who has been weaving this cotton-jump stripe, and this huccabac?

MAMMY SAL
Dunno'm. Sophronie, she might-a-be'.

MARY WASHINGTON
I found them in the kitchen-garden. Who is responsible?

MAMMY SAL
Dunno who-all, Missy Washin'n.

MARY WASHINGTON
What *do* you know, Mammy Sal?

MAMMY SAL
Knows ma Sabba-day chatachasm; yas'm!

MARY WASHINGTON
That's good. And if *I* was Mistress of Mt. Vernon, Mammy, I would learn you your *week*-day catechism.

MAMMY SAL
Yas'm. Amen!
(MARY WASHINGTON *goes into the house.* MAMMY SAL *starts to go off, left, with the rake, but—glancing back at the house door—pauses, leans the rake against the building, and slowly returns.*)
Oh, by 'n' by!
(*She begins a low singing.*)

"I know my robe goin' ter fit me well,
I'm agoin' ter lay down de heabby load.

"I tried it on at de gates ob hell.
I'm agoin' ter lay down de heabby load."

(*Picking up the copper kettle, she begins to thrum and beat on it to her song, swaying her body in rhythmic motion.*)

"Oh, by-an'-by, by-an'-by,
I'm agoin' ter lay down de heabby load!

"Oh, by-an'-by, by-an'-by,
I'm agoin' ter lay down de heabby load!"

(*While the black woman, in her scarlet turban and yellow garment, increases her dance to the burnished kettle's music, the immense Figure of an Indian moves in to the colonnade, from behind the kitchen building, and stands silhouetted against the brightening sunset. In long, red blanket, overtopped by high, white-feathered headdress*

flowing behind to the ground, his painted wooden mask turns enigmatical eyes toward the dancing NEGRESS. *For a moment the* MAMMY *does not behold this Figure, who watches, motionless. Then—in deep, guttural voice—it speaks.*)

THE FIGURE
Woman!

MAMMY SAL (*transfixed—drops the kettle, with a stifled cry*)
O Angel ob de Abysm!

THE FIGURE
Woman! Canst thou fill the hollow places of hunger?

MAMMY SAL (*sinking to her knees*)
O Marse Abaddon, what his name is Apollyon!

THE FIGURE
Mammy Sal! Canst thou cook corn pone?

MAMMY SAL
O yas'r, Marse Apollyon!

THE FIGURE
Corn pone, and roast fowl therewith, and sturgeon broiled?

MAMMY SAL
O yas'r, glory salvation! I'se sassafras fire an' beechnut coals, what'll cook 'em gran' on de spit.

THE FIGURE
Rise up, then, Mammy Sal, and be thou numbered among the saints! (*From behind the mask explodes a loud roar of laughter. Then—dropping off the blanket, feathers and painted face—a tall, great-limbed youth, with glowing face and light-brown hair grown long, steps forth in mud-spattered gear and boots of a backwoodsman. Pointing with a surveyor's tripod at the aghast woman, he shouts with huge, boyish delight. For an instant,* MAMMY SAL *stares dumbly, then leaps up with a scream of welcome.*)

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MAMMY SAL
Marse George! Ah-ya! honey Marse George!

GEORGE WASHINGTON (*roaring with laughter*)
Oho-ho, Mammy Sal! Scart ye, did I?

MAMMY SAL
'Lijah an' prophets, honey! Whar yo' done git all dat debbel-Injun truck?

GEORGE
Swapped it off a redskin, up country. What's all the good news at home?

MAMMY SAL
Marse George come home: dat all's de good news. My, my! honey belubed: yo' feet upon de mountins, dey's beautifu' 's de lilies ob de fiel'.

GEORGE
Never mind my muddy boots, Mammy. Just mind my belt strap—and that corn pone. I've been a-fastin' since sun-up. (*Stooping behind the kitchen colonnade, he lifts forth a gun, knapsack and kit, from which he detaches two large limp birds.*) Here; run along and cook these wild turkeys I shot. And mind—corn pone—roast fowl —sturgeon—

MAMMY SAL
Broil' wid de sassafras fire! Ri'choff, honey! (*Seizing up her kettle, she is rushing in at the kitchen inner door, when a dog bolts past her there from inside and springs toward young* WASHINGTON.) My Lo'd! Heah's yo' Mopsey-houn'!
(*She disappears within.*)

GEORGE (*patting and fondling the hound*)
Halloa, Mopsey, Mopsey gal! Well, well, old Mopsey mine: ain't forgot your master? (*Squatting on the ground, he rolls over, laughing and playing with the dog.*) Come here, you darling bitch; kiss me quick! Aha! Get

away: quit your slatherin'. What you nosin' for—maple sugar? (*Sitting up, he pulls out some maple sugar, and holds it teasingly.*) Here: have a lick, old Mops! How's all the doggone family? How's Musick and Pilot and Truelove? And the pupsies: where's little Chaunter and Tipsy? Has your ladyship weaned 'em?
(ADJUTANT MUSE *comes stumbling down from the kitchen inner doorway, followed by* VAN BRAMM. *The former carries a long punch-glass, from which he is drinking.*)

MUSE
Tipsy, says he! Listen thar, Jacob!

VAN BRAMM (*spying* GEORGE)
Vell, de tefel!—Master George Vashington! God save you and tamn you, and velcome you pack!

GEORGE (*still fondling the dog*)
God save you both, gentlemen, and pardon me not rising. Mopsey has the floor, you see.

VAN BRAMM
And how is vent all your surveyings and vorks in de vilderness?

GEORGE
'Twas a grand trip, Cap'n: big woods, March winds, wonderful mountains, villainous weather. Forty miles a day, lots of work and lousy nights.
(*He lifts himself up on the bench, where he feeds the dog maple sugar.*)

VAN BRAMM
Ah! Nights it was lousy—so?

GEORGE
Aye, Sir, indoors we catched some big game. In the loggers' huts, that was. The first night, I stripped off and laid me on a bunk in the dark—pitch black. Then begun the campaign: the March of the Legions, I called it. Tell

about David among the Philistines! I'll lay a doubloon I slew ten score o' Goliahs. After that, I swore off on beds, and slept out nights by the fire.

VAN BRAMM
On de ground? And vild peasts all apout?

MUSE
Why not, Dutchy? Bear baitin' 's bigger sport than flea stalkin'. (*Offering his punch-glass.*) George, have a swig!

VAN BRAMM
Master Adjutant Muse, you are trunk; and trunk is no manual tisciplines for young gentlemans. Look now, Master George; here pe our veapons: vill you practise?

MUSE (*loudly*)
Jury! A jury, says I! George, I appoint you gran' jury. Who's drunk? What's the verdict?

GEORGE (*rising, with a laugh*)
Nay, Master Adjutant, I plead *non compos.* Having had no punch, I beg your indulgence.

MUSE (*flourishing his empty glass*)
Indulgence? *Indulgence* is a fair verdict. A mos' hon'rable gran' jury! Jacob—George begs my indulgence in s' more punch. Your mos' obedient! (*Bowing unsteadily, he goes into the kitchen. The dog follows him in.*)

VAN BRAMM (*handing* GEORGE *one of his swords*)
And now, young Sir, you is rememper your positions—yes?

GEORGE
I guess so, Cap'n; though they ain't exactly Injun tactics.

VAN BRAMM
No, tamn it: proadswords is tactics of Christian gentries. Gif me my proadsword and my piple, and I vill learn you

ampitions pigger as de vorld and de kingdoms of heaven dereof.

GEORGE

Thank you, Captain; but my ambitions are no bigger than Mt. Vernon.

VAN BRAMM

Ah? And ven some odder young gentleman vill insult your honour, and tefy you to a tuel—vat?

GEORGE

My honour is my own, Sir, and not another's. I would call the young gentleman an ass, and invite him to wrastle me.

VAN BRAMM

My poy, mark my vords! No man can tell ven vill come his testiny to fight. Vone day yet you vill tank God on your knees down for old Jacob Van Bramm and his proadswords.

GEORGE

I thank him now, Sir, on my feet. Will you show me those positions?

VAN BRAMM

Ah!—positions is petter! (*Drawing himself up with military precision, he demonstrates the sword positions and strokes, while* GEORGE *watches, attentive.*) Vone—so; two—and so; t'ree—and so. Pegin, now!

(*They practise together the broadsword exercises.* GEORGE *strikes and parries with carefulness and quick decision. The blades clatter briskly, amid occasional sharp and gay interjections. Soon the house door opens, and* LORD FAIRFAX *steps out, peering short-sightedly.*)

FAIRFAX

What's the racket there? Who's that? George! Him! (*Calling back.*) Lawrence! He's come; 'tis George. (*Hastening forward.*) Lad! My dear lad!

GEORGE (*turning around*)
Ha—your lordship!

FAIRFAX
Home again! (*He grasps* GEORGE'S *hand.*) Grips, laddie, grips! Nay, both on 'em! (GEORGE *tosses his sword away, and gives his other hand.*)

VAN BRAMM (*picking the sword up.*) Tamm! (*After a moment, he goes off, grumbling.*)

GEORGE
I'm right happy to see you, my lord.

FAIRFAX (*rapping him with his knuckles*)
Sound? Safe? Solid all through? No mishaps?

GEORGE
None, Sir.

FAIRFAX
And your trip?

GEORGE
Oh, a grand trip, Sir! Over the Blue Ridge, and up the Shenandoah Valley. Your lordship's estates are all surveyed. I've fetched you home a map in my kit.

LAWRENCE (*appearing in the house doorway, calls*)
Brother George!

GEORGE (*waving to him*)
Halloa, brother Lawrence!

FAIRFAX (*to* GEORGE, *portentously*)
Hearkee; he's fetching your mother. 'Tis a conclave. We're settling your future career!

GEORGE
Mine?

LAWRENCE (*to* MARY WASHINGTON, *who comes down the steps with him*)
There he is. (*Spying his mother,* GEORGE *hastens toward*

her with eager affection. Meeting, they greet each other with a controlled gladness.)

MARY WASHINGTON (*giving her hand, speaks low*)
George, my dear son.

GEORGE (*awkwardly kisses her hand; then looks in her face*)
Madam, I hope you are well.

MARY WASHINGTON
I am very well, George. Your shirt is wet and very muddy.

GEORGE
Aye, Madam, 'tis; the creek was muddy; I swam over.

MARY WASHINGTON
You will need some cherry cordial. Come in.

LAWRENCE
Your pardon, Madam, for a moment; I will first help George in with his kit. Will your lordship be so good—?

FAIRFAX (*visibly flustered, offers his arm*)
Mistress Washington, your son appears to have done nobly.

MARY WASHINGTON (*intensely serene*)
Appears, Sir? (*Unnoticing his proffered arm, she walks beside him toward the house door*)

FAIRFAX (*fidgeting*)
He tells me he has surveyed all my estates in the wilderness.

MARY WASHINGTON (*simply*)
Then, Sir, 'tis so.

FAIRFAX (*stammering*)
In four weeks, Madam—four weeks—that is really astonishing.

MARY WASHINGTON (*with gracious finality*)
Not at all, Sir. George always does what he sets out to do. (*Calling back from the doorstep.*) George, there's dry shirts in your second drawer. Make haste and shift. (*She goes in.*)

FAIRFAX (*following her, murmurs audibly*)
Shade of Queen Anne, succour thy subject! (*As* GEORGE *stoops to pick up his kit,* LAWRENCE *stands for a moment silent—looking off through the colonnade, where the twilight colours are deepening in the distance. When he speaks,* GEORGE *turns at his tone, and approaches him, quietly anxious.*)

LAWRENCE
George, before we go in, I've wanted a word with you.

GEORGE
You are troubled, brother Lawrence! What is it? What's in your mind for me?

LAWRENCE (*dreamily*)
This, George: home—Mt. Vernon. That's in my mind for you, always. Look, a moment: look away down the river—the bend, there, in the sunset: quiet, full of God's fire.

GEORGE
'Tis very quiet.

LAWRENCE
Yet it moves on, always. George, what is home?

GEORGE
Why, this, where we stand—here.

LAWRENCE (*with strangeness*)
Aye, and there, where we look off—that bend in the river, moving on—always. So quiet! Yet far down there's the sea, the roar of great waters—the sea, that leads out to Europe—the whole world, and the stars over it.

GEORGE (*gently*)
Why do you speak like this?

LAWRENCE (*with sudden impulse*)
George—what are you to be?

GEORGE (*puzzled*)
I?

LAWRENCE
Our father's father, his father came first up that river. For a hundred years, this valley has been home and country to our race; and for them the river was moving on then, like now—quiet, full of God's fire at sundown. So it always moves on—and remains. So does our home, and our country.

GEORGE (*broodingly*)
Home, and our country. (*Starting.*) But what makes you say this to me?

LAWRENCE
George, one day Mt. Vernon may be yours—not mine. Aye, sooner than later, for this one lung of mine can't serve me much longer.

GEORGE
Your lung?

LAWRENCE
When you were away, the doctor tested me.

GEORGE
Lawrence!

LAWRENCE (*smiling faintly*)
I won't last. So I asked your mother to come over, and confer about you.

GEORGE
Me!

LAWRENCE
Your career. They're discussing it now, in there: England, America, army, navy, the country: which would you choose yourself, George: sea, sword, or the soil?

GEORGE
Me? The mud on my boots, Lawrence: this soil of America—home. Farming for me!

LAWRENCE
Ah, so I guessed. God bless you, George! Mt. Vernon is a good farm.

GEORGE
We will make it still better.

LAWRENCE
We will?

GEORGE
Us both. We'll plan it out together—soon.

LAWRENCE (*murmurs*)
Soon.

GEORGE
I will make a survey, and we'll study improvements. (*The house door opens.*)

MARY WASHINGTON (*calls from the doorway*)
George! When are you coming in? 'Tis growing dark.

GEORGE
Directly, Madam. (*The door closes. Together they go toward the doorstep. Behind them, as they go—panelled by the central arch of the colonnade—gleams the last dull red of the sunset.*)

LAWRENCE (*pausing at the doorway*)
Brother, your hand! How quiet the dark comes on! Can you hear any sound?

GEORGE (*slowly—listening*)

Yes—I can hear frogs piping. That swamp by the creek must be drained.

(*Darkness deepens over the scene, as vaguely their dim forms pass within.*)

FIRST TRANSITION

Now only the piping of frogs is heard.

Now the piping takes on a peculiar flute-like tone, and grows musically louder, assuming the notes of a melody the tune of Bangry Rewy ballad.

And now the fluting ceases, as the voice of QUILLOQUON *begins to sing:*

QUILLOQUON

Bangry Rewy acourting did ride,
His sword and pistol by his side.
Cambokey,
Quiddledown, quilloquon!

Bangry rode to the wild boar's den
And spied the bones of a thousand men.
Cambokey,
Quiddledown, quilloquon!

There Bangry drew his warring knife
And speared the wild boar of his life.
Cambokey,
Quiddledown, quilloquon!

Then Bangry rode him home again
Amid the cheers of a thousand men.

(*From the dark, excited voices begin to shout: "Hurrah! Hurrah!" and the voice of* QUILLOQUON grows shriller as *he sings:*)

Cambokey!

(*And now—in a sudden burst of golden sunshine—the cocked hat and face of the singer are seen disappearing round the corner of the kitchen, left, flipping out the final refrain:*)

Quiddledown, quilloquon!

SCENE II

(About 1756)

Meanwhile through the colonnade, right, three GIRLS *and a young* MAN—*all about twenty—come running on, shouting in gay excitement: "Hurrah, Colonel Washington!"*

They are accompanied by a soldierly fellow, in rusty British uniform.

THE FIRST GIRL
Colonel Washington! Colonel Washington!

THE SECOND
Where is the hero of the Monongahela?

THE THIRD
Run, George Fairfax; find him for us. Tell him the three Graces are come to laurel-crown him for his glorious survival of the French and Indians.

GEORGE FAIRFAX
And you think that will fetch him? Ladies, you miscalculate your hero. He may face the arms of a thousand fighting men, but the arms of three worshipping females —never! I'll tell him three ancient market-women are come to purchase his vegetables.
(*Laughing, he runs off, left.*)

THE SECOND GIRL
Scurrilous man! "Ancient," indeed!

THE THIRD
He'll announce us as the weird witches, with humps and broomsticks.

THE FIRST
Ann Spearing, Elizabeth Dent, bow ye down with envy! Here on this spot, even I, Sally Fairfax of Belvoir, once played "Button to get Pawns for Redemption" with the renowned George Washington, and redeemed the pawns —with kisses!

ANN (THE SECOND)
Sally!

ELIZABETH (THE THIRD)
You kissed the master of Mt. Vernon?

SALLY
Not the master *then:* that was long before his brother Lawrence died—when George was a cub, and I was a kitten.

ANN
Tush! I will envy no felines. (*Showing a military coat which she carries.*) Behold our hero's coat, that Bishop here poached for me! In this he fought when Braddock fell; in this he fought, leading our glorious Virginians, while the yelling savages fired from the woods, and the stupid regulars ran away in their red coats. (*Turning to the man in British uniform.*) Am not I right, Bishop?

BISHOP
Aye, ma'am: you can see four bulletholes there, was shot in it then.

ELIZABETH (*examining the coat with* SALLY)
How awful! And his horse was shot under him, you say?

BISHOP
Two horses, ma'am. Then he mounted a third, what I fetched him. That un belonged to my old General Brad-

dock, what the General, just afore he died, he give Colonel Washington—and me to go along in his sarvice.

ANN

Think of it, girls: the whole king's army routed—seven hundred killed and wounded—and only our despised American militia to give real fight to the enemy.

BISHOP

Right enough, ma'am: your Virginia boys they fought back o' trees, like the Injuns. Clever they was! I'm a red-coat, but I says it: If my old General he'd a-took the Colonel's advice, we'd a-never been licked.

ANN

And now the whole colony is calling for Colonel Washington to raise a new army.

ELIZABETH (*flourishing her wreath of wild laurel*)

Oh, where *is* he? I'm just dying to crown him!

SALLY

Here's Humphrey Knight, his farmer; he'll know. (*Through the colonnade, right, a man about thirty, in working clothes, is entering with an older man about fifty, wearing a miller's sack.* SALLY *speaks to the younger man.*) Humphrey, where is Colonel Washington?

HUMPHREY

Well, ma'am, you might find him to the red barn, and then—you mightn't.

ELIZABETH

Come on, girls: hurry!

ANN

Wait for me! I've a Latin quotation to go with that laurel. (*They run off, left.*)

(*Following* HUMPHREY, *several Negroes enter, carrying a long wooden box, divided in six open compartments, with supporting timbers to stand on.*)

HUMPHREY
Set her thar, boys, and wait for orders. Marse Washington he'll be along soon. (*The Negroes set down the box, and seat themselves beside the kitchen building, in the left background, where they commence a low, drowsy singing among themselves.* HUMPHREY—*leaning against one of the colonnade pillars—takes from his pocket one of several wooden pins, and begins to whittle it smooth, speaking to his companion.*) Hot weather, William.

WILLIAM (*pulling his fingers uneasily*)
Aye; 'tis warm, waitin'.

HUMPHREY
Waitin' for who-all?—him?

WILLIAM
Aye, him.

HUMPHREY (*curious*)
For what-all?

WILLIAM (*importantly reticent*)
Confidential.

HUMPHREY
Oh! Mill ain't runnin'?

WILLIAM (*shaking his head*)
She's gone dry. (*Turning the conversation to the box.*) What's this-yere?

HUMPHREY
Seed plantin' outfit.

WILLIAM
This late a-season?

HUMPHREY
War times, he takes his seasons when he catches 'em. Sperriments, William: sperriments in soil mixin's for wheat, oats and barley. The Cornal he's goin' in deep.

WILLIAM
Aye; he do that.

HUMPHREY
Six compartments, you see, all numbered orderly. Each one we mixes different—like marle and half marle, mud and earth sandish, cow dung, sheep dung, clay and such like. Look: he's a-comin' now with river muck.

WILLIAM
Who's with 'm?

HUMPHREY
Yon's Cap'n John Posey—come round, I reckon, to borrer more cash off the Cornal.
(*Through the colonnade, right,* WASHINGTON *enters wheeling a hand-barrow, containing black earth and cloth bags. He wears an old straw hat and farming clothes. Seeing* HUMPHREY *and the box, he sets down the barrow, and removes his hat, mopping heavily his sun-reddened face. He is close followed by* CAPTAIN JOHN POSEY, *a pleasant-faced, out-at-ends country squire about forty, clothed with an indigent elegance. He toys irresolutely with a bone-topped cane, and speaks with a gentle drawling.*)

CAPTAIN JOHN
Colonel George, don't that wheelin' make yer perspire?

WASHINGTON
Sweat buckets, Sir, thank God! (*Pointing to the barrow.*) Humphrey, how's that? (*To the* MILLER, *who, with* HUMPHREY, *has pulled off his cap.*) Good day, William.

WILLIAM (*pulling his forelock*)
Aye, your honour!

HUMPHREY (*testing a chunk of earth from the barrow with his fingers*)
Right smart muck, I calls it, Cornal.

CAPTAIN JOHN
I'd a-thought now, Colonel George—I'd a-thought a-wheelin' dirt was work for niggers.

WASHINGTON
Dirt, Cap'n John! This here is wealth of the Indies—gold ore, Sir. Humphrey and me we've struck a mine down the creek; eh, Humphrey?

HUMPHREY
So we hopes, Sir.

CAPTAIN JOHN
Then I'm in luck, Colonel. I come over to ask your advice.

WASHINGTON
Gold ore advice, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN JOHN
Well, kind o' mixed: lucre and love combined: Mammon and Venus, Sir.

WASHINGTON (*laughing*)
That sounds like a love match!

CAPTAIN JOHN (*solemnly*)
Wait till you hear. (*Glancing at* HUMPHREY *and* WILLIAM.) Could I state my case—confidential?

WASHINGTON
Of course; certainly. (*Exchanging a look with* HUMPHREY, *who grins, he moves off with* CAPTAIN JOHN *toward the house.*) What's your case, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN JOHN
Why, Colonel George, as you pretty well know, I'm hard up, but I could a-been able to have satisfied all my old arrears some months ago by marrying an old widow woman in this county. She has large sums o' cash by her, and pretty good estate.

WASHINGTON
Sounds promising.

CAPTAIN JOHN
Yes, but damme—

WASHINGTON
What's wrong?

CAPTAIN JOHN
Well, Sir, she's as thick as she is high, and she gits drunk at least three or four times a week, which is disagreeable to me, seein' when drunk she has a viliant sperrit. So it's been a great dispute in my mind what to do.

WASHINGTON
Too risky?

CAPTAIN JOHN
Why, Sir, if my last wife had a-been an even-tempered woman, I believe I should run all risks; but her sperrit has given me such a shock, I'm afraid to run the risk again. Yet, damme, I *must* marry right soon, bein' hard up. For short, Colonel George, could you advise me?

WASHINGTON
Well, for short, Cap'n John, if you *must* marry and time presses, here at least are ready assets: one available widow, with cash and estate, sober three days in the week. The other days, Sir, you are very welcome at Mt. Vernon.

CAPTAIN JOHN (*as they turn again toward the wheelbarrow*)
Right neighbourly, Colonel; I call that downright neighbourly.

WASHINGTON
So, Sir, if you *should* yield to Venus, I will propitiate Mammon with twenty bales of tobacco. Humphrey here will give you my order for 'em when the chimes ring. (*Taking out a note pad, he writes on it.*)

CAPTAIN JOHN (*striking an oratorical attitude*)
Colonel George, posterity will beatify your name, Sir, as the best neighbour in the Potomac Valley. I will yield to Venus, Sir; I will yield promptly. (*He goes off, left.*)

WASHINGTON (*handing a slip of paper to* HUMPHREY)
Memorandum for Captain John Posey. (*Turning to the* MILLER.) Now William, you have a report for me on the mill?

WILLIAM (*looking hard at the cap in his hands, twists it with slow fidgeting*)
Aye, your honour—without offence—confidential.

WASHINGTON
Oh!—certainly. (*With a wink at* HUMPHREY, *he walks away a few paces with the* MILLER. *While they stand conversing together, the Negroes continue, more loud, their drowsy singing. After a moment,* WASHINGTON *shakes the* MILLER'S *hand, with a smile, and speaks to him cheerfully as they return to* HUMPHREY.) All right, friend William, I am pleased with your services. Call at my barn office to-morrow morning at quarter past five punctual.

WILLIAM
Thank ye kindly, Cornal—me and the mill too! (*He goes off through the colonnade, left, smiling and muttering to himself.* WASHINGTON *looks at* HUMPHREY, *and both grin broadly.*)

WASHINGTON
Confidential, Humphrey, where are you taking our experiment box?

HUMPHREY
Thought likely, Sir, you'd have her set by the greenhouse.

WASHINGTON
Quite right. (*To one of the Negroes.*) Here, Zekiel, you and Isaiah tote this along.

ZEKIEL
Yas'r, massa. (*The Negroes lift the box and start off with it.*)

WASHINGTON
Wait. (*To* HUMPHREY.) You understand, when we fill these compartments, the different soils must be mixed very fine with the manures. (*Lifting a sack from the barrow.*) We can use a bag like this, to jabble all well together before using.

HUMPHREY
I get ye, Cornal.

WASHINGTON
Then in each division we plant three grains of wheat, three of oats, and three of barley—all at equal distance and depth. I'll show you later. Run along now, Zekiel. How's little Jerry and his Mammy?

ZEKIEL
Oh, dey's right smartish, massa.

WASHINGTON
Tell Jerry I fetched him home a rattler's skin, with nine rattles.

ZEKIEL
Golly! Nine fotches de luck; I'se tell 'm, massa; he sho pop 'is eyes wif ticklement, yas'r! (*He goes out, left, with the box.*)
(*For a moment,* WASHINGTON *stands gazing off; then, dropping the sack in the barrow, he turns suddenly and strides back and forth, stretching his arms with relish in the sunlight.*)

WASHINGTON
Ho, Humphrey, Humphrey, here's the life! By the etarnal, 'tis grand to get back home to real living again! War is a silly interruption of farming.

HUMPHREY
It do set us back, Cornal.

WASHINGTON
More than some great folks guess. If every king would raise his own vegetables, our military manuals might all be almanacks. Here's the kings of France and England, now, warring for a new world, and me helping his British Majesty, God save him, to prove his argument with gunpowder; and meantime, Humphrey, here's our home ploughing is full of stumps, and the old swamp only half drained!

HUMPHREY
Gunpowder, they say, is rare snuff for the gentry, Sir.

WASHINGTON
Yes, yes, it hets the blood, man, like rum punch! I've knowed days myself when I'd rather hear the bullets whistling than the robins, and a tom-tom drumming than a partridge. For all that gunpowder is poor truck for farmers: 'tis a hot snuff, but a cold fertilizer. (*He looks at* HUMPHREY *whittling.*) What's that—a timber pin?

HUMPHREY
Aye, Sir; for the new cow shed.

WASHINGTON (*taking out a pocket knife*)
Let me finish it. Have a seat. I've something to say to you.

HUMPHREY (*taking another piece of wood from his pocket, sits on the bench*)
Thank ye, Sir. (WASHINGTON *sits on the bag in the wheelbarrow. For a while, both whittle in silence; then* WASHINGTON—*without looking up—speaks slowly.*)

WASHINGTON
Humphrey—do you ever find it hard to express yourself?

HUMPHREY
Never find it nothin' else, Sir.

WASHINGTON

I guess 'tis mostly so. I guess that all the eloquence of the prophets is just to proclaim man's dumbness. As for me, Humphrey, to get back from war and watch plants growing—'tis like getting back to the first garden, and talking with the Almighty in his own language—wonder, not words.

HUMPHREY

'Tis a kind of sarvice, Sir, without the preacher. I often thought that.

WASHINGTON

Just so. And so I guess we can rightly call it that gardening—real gardening—is the Word of God. And there's three great things, Humphrey, in that religion: first, there's quiet; and second, there's order; and third, there's growth. Quiet, order, growth: there, I believe, is sound faith for a man or a nation.

HUMPHREY

I inkles your meanin', Sir.

WASHINGTON

'Tis a big meaning. Here's our country, America—a big acre to garden: not just the clearing, stumping, fencing, furrows to turn; not just ditching and ploughing God's earth, mixing of soils: 'tis the right planting, Humphrey—planting and mixing of men, aye, and the weeding—the sowing and harvest of peace and war.

HUMPHREY

Judgin', Sir, by public meetin's in war times, there's some would plough with their tongues, and harrer with their wind-pipes.

WASHINGTON

Aye—quiet hell with hullaballoo: 'tis a common instinct. God puts in each man and nation one great desire—for liberty, liberty to grow: so most of us begin by grabbing our neighbour's garden—by the Grace of God.

HUMPHREY

Livin' together is sure kind of a tarnal tangle-patch. What do you reckon, Sir, is the way out?

WASHINGTON

Order—the order of liberty: and that means method and will to practise the love of our neighbour. Order, Humphrey, is the most beautiful thing in creation. 'Twas God's command to chaos. (*Through the colonnade, left, re-enter the three* GIRLS *and* BISHOP. *Tiptoeing behind the pillars, they peep out and listen.*)

HUMPHREY

I wish you was home more oftener, Cornal. A feller would raise more out o' farmin'—and you along to talk with.

WASHINGTON

Somehow talking comes easier here—along with a few home folks. Out there, fighting, they call me a shut-mouth man.

HUMPHREY (*with a chuckle*)

You, Sir? That *is* a good un!

WASHINGTON

Anyhow, here I am—home, and now, Humphrey, we'll right enough farm it, eh? I've a new plan to tell you about cattle feeding. Listen here: If we should fat one bullock altogether with potatoes, another with Indian meal, and a third— (*Shrill cries break short his speaking. With a rush from the colonnade, the three* GIRLS, *followed by* BISHOP, *surround the wheelbarrow, where* ELIZABETH—*from behind—waves high the laurel wreath, and lowers it on* WASHINGTON'S *head.*)

ANN AND SALLY

Crown him! Crown him!

ELIZABETH

Hail to the hero of battles!

WASHINGTON (*rising, flustered*)
Ladies!

ANN
Laurels for the temple of Mars!

ELIZABETH
Oh, don't take it off!

WASHINGTON (*removing the wreath from his brow, looks at it, and stutters*)
L-ladies—

SALLY
George! How wonderful to be a real triumvirate!

WASHINGTON
A what, Sally?

SALLY
A Roman warrior with three lives, and a horse apiece.

ANN (*with a grand courtesy*)
Exitus acta probat!

WASHINGTON
Beg pardon?

ANN
That's the motto on your shield of arms. I'm sure it must fit—it sounds so glorious: *Exitus acta*—

SALLY
Be quiet, Ann! O George, now, tell us all about the bloodshed. But do come away from that dirty wheelbarrow.

ELIZABETH
Please tell us!

ANN
Everything! Don't hold back the worst, will you?

WASHINGTON
Ladies, everything to oblige! Where shall I begin? You have heard, I believe, of my death and dying speech—

SALLY
Oh, several versions of each.

WASHINGTON
Permit me, then, to correct the former, while I compose the latter. (*He attempts to withdraw.*)

ELIZABETH AND ANN
No, no! You can't run. Go on!

WASHINGTON
Next, ladies, I will narrate how our conquering army was tarnally thrashed to thunder by the enemy, who knows how to fight.

SALLY
George, that isn't heroic!

WASHINGTON (*raising the laurel wreath*)
And, last, permit me to lay this tribute where it belongs —on the head of Bishop, who found me the horse that fetched me home from Ohio, to find myself—a Roman. (*Putting the laurel on* BISHOP'S *head, he bows himself out of the* GIRLS' *circle, and starts off.*)

SALLY
Don't let him escape, girls!

ANN
Nay, indeed, he sha'n't! Here's a warrant for his captivity. Look! (*She holds up a slip of paper.*) Read what I found in a coat pocket!

ELIZABETH (*snatching it*)
What is it? (*Reading aloud.*) "One engagement ring, two Pounds, six Shillings, o Pence." (*The* GIRLS *shout with excitement: "Engagement ring!"*)

WASHINGTON (*bursting out*)
Young ladies! Where—? (*He stops, confused.*)

SALLY
Oho! Where indeed? Where does this pledge hold him captive?

ANN
Rumor answers—in a certain white house, on the Pamunkey.

SALLY
The White House!

ELIZABETH
Oh, the White House! (*To* WASHINGTON.) Nay, really—the charming Custis?

ANN
Look at him—frozen image of Guilt! Girls, we must deliver him to his fate. You see, now, where all this pathway of war is leading!—to the doorstep of a certain White House and a charming widow!

ELIZABETH (*coaxingly*)
Honest, Colonel George—are you engaged?

WASHINGTON (*icily*)
Yes, madam: I am engaged in farming; and I am busy.

SALLY (*under her breath*)
You hear, girls? We'd best stop teasing. (*With bated tone.*) Forgive us, George: we've been silly, but we're serious now. Do tell us about the war—what's to happen. When are you going back to take command?

WASHINGTON (*flashing a look of grave feeling*)
Never—till I am offered it. His Majesty has never yet commissioned me to honourable command. I will never again accept of less, while brave men are butchered wholesale, with flags flying. (*From the left, an* OFFICER *in British uniform, carrying a document with seals, is hurrying in. He is about to pass* WASHINGTON, *but stops, speaking short of breath. He is followed, more slowly, by a tattered country Fellow, carrying a fiddle.*)

THE OFFICER
I beg pardon, Sir. Is this Colonel Washington?

WASHINGTON
It is, Sir.

THE OFFICER (*saluting, hands him the document*)
I come from headquarters, Colonel. I bring you here his Majesty's commission.

WASHINGTON (*takes it, clenching his jaw; then speaks, slowly*)
What commission, Sir?

THE OFFICER
As Commander of all the Colonial forces in Virginia. (WASHINGTON *stares at him. The* GIRLS *cry out exultantly, clapping their hands.*)

THE GIRLS
Colonel Washington—commander by commission! Called back to his country! (*In the midst of their cries, the* FIDDLER *draws his bow on his fiddle strings. At its sound, pitched high and sweet like the* GIRLS' *voices, black darkness blots out the scene—to a tune still playing from the darkness.*)

SECOND TRANSITION

The tune deepens to an old plantation melody, to which the strings of the fiddle now are struck with low strumming.

Very faintly, at first, the mellow voices of NEGRO MEN *begin to sing in choral harmony, with which soon the voices of* WOMEN *and* CHILDREN *join.*

THE VOICES

Adam and Eba, wipe yo' eyes,
'Tain't no good fo' ter gaze at de garden;
Closed is de do's ob Paradise;
'Tain't no good fo' ter axe no pardon.

Oh, whar'll I lay my heart down?
Oh, whar'll I lay my heart down?
Eden home is far away.
Oh, nebber mind!
I'll lay my heart down,
Down in de lap ob ol' Virgin-ee-ay!

Moses, drop dat ol' staf in yo' hand,
'Tain't no use yo' eyesight strainin';
'Tain't fo' you no promise' land;
Egypt won't nebber turn into Canaan.

Oh, whar'll I lay my heart down?
Oh, whar'll I lay my heart down?
Eden home is far away.
Oh, nebber mind!
I'll lay my heart down,
Down in de lap ob ol' Virgin-ee-ay!

(While this chorus is growing louder, out of the darkness —one by one—lanterns begin to shine, casting mysterious shadows through the colonnade, gradually revealing grouped forms and colourful movements of festal preparation.)

SCENE III

(May, 1759)

Like a moving frieze in the background—to and fro between house and kitchen—Negroes are passing, some in gay liveries, others with bright body-cloths, that set off the burnished ebony of their limbs. All bear on their heads, or in their hands, trenchers and trays, heaped with dishes from the meal indoors, from which the hum of after-supper talk and laughter resounds through the open house door.

Among the Negroes are MAMMY SAL, ZEKIEL *and* ISAIAH.

MAMMY SAL—*appearing slightly older than before—resplendent in pied head-gear, bustles proudly in her overseering.*

Through the chorus as it dies away, her voice is heard—in half-chanted cadence—speaking to the passing Figures.

MAMMY SAL

Keep on a-movin' on: ri'chon in, ri'chon in: keep on a-movin' on in, dar! O Zekiel, now's de glory we been waitin'. De bride an' de groom, de groom an' de bride—blessed be de bride an' de bridegroom!

ZEKIEL

Big doin's, Mammy Sal: sho big doin's dis yere night at de home manshin!

MAMMY SAL

W'en de man he bring de noo woman home, w'en de massa he bring home de noo missy-bride—praise de Lo'd ob Crayshun!—den shall de feas' be spread, an' de fiddle he's say *Glory!* an' de feet dey's holler *Amen!* an' de evenin' stars dey's all grab a-han's, fo' ter sing de Crayshun *Hallelujah!*

ZEKIEL

An' I done hear tell, Mammy Sal, w'at de war she's all ober, an' de Injuns dey's got lickt an' got de 'ligion, so's Marse Corn'l Washin'n done could put on 's silk stockin's, and wed 'is lady-bride down de W'ite House.

MAMMY SAL

An' you done hear tell de gospel troof, Zekiel:

Weddin' an' feas-a-tin' comin' now forebber:
Hang up de musket-gun!
War-fightin'—done gone forebber;
Take down de fiddle-bow!

O honey Marse George!—an' him now de bridegroom, w'at his ole Mammy Sal done feed up wid de co'n pone, in de boy-time ob 's years!

ZEKIEL
But w'ar' de bride?

MAMMY SAL
W'at! You ain't seen her yit? Watch out: he's a-bringin' her now wid de neighbours an' gues's. De's a-comin' ou'chere, fo' ter dance de welcome-home rinktums.

ZEKIEL
But w'ich a-one be ri'chenough Missy Washin'n?

MAMMY SAL
Watch out, I'm a-tellin' you, fo' de rose-flower lady, wid de two li'l bud-flower chilluns. De boy-chile, he Marse Jack Custis; an' de gal-chile sister, she Missy Patty; an' de lady-mudder—w'at was Missy Martha Custis—she ri'chenough now Marse George' bride—Missy Washin'n. (*Turning to the tray-bearers.*) Keep on a-movin' on, dar: ri'chon in, now!

(*While* MAMMY SAL *has been speaking, there has come forth from the house a happy throng of* GUESTS, *chiefly young people, who gather buzzing on the grass and about the colonnade—their old-time gowns and buckles gleaming in the lantern-shine. Among the last—preceded down the steps by a* FIDDLER, *who treads backward before them—come* GEORGE *and* MARTHA WASHINGTON, *in their wedding costumes. Riding high on his left shoulder,* WASHINGTON *carries a little* GIRL; *before him—and next to the* FIDDLER—*a little* BOY *bears the fiddle; while* WASHINGTON, *with his right hand, escorts the* BRIDE *to the center middle-ground. There the* FIDDLER *mounts a table against a column, while a clamour of shouts goes up from the* GUESTS.)

THE GUESTS
The bride! Long live the bride! God save the groom!

WASHINGTON (*lifting the little* BOY *upon his right shoulder*)
Friends, permit me to present these mascots of Mt. Vernon—Mistress Patty and Master Jack. (*The* GUESTS *applaud; the Children wave from their high seats.*) They shall preside with the Fiddler! (*Gaily, he swings the Children from his shoulders upon the table. The* GUESTS *applaud again, and* CAPTAIN JOHN POSEY *cries out from among them.*)

CAPTAIN JOHN
The bride! Speech from the bride! (*The* GUESTS *take up the call.*)

MARTHA WASHINGTON (*laughing, lifts the keys at her girdle and jingles them*)
Nay, my dears, not from me! In the house of the Washingtons, I am Keeper of the Keys, but the Speaker of the House is the Colonel. (*She makes a low courtesy to* WASHINGTON.)

POSEY
Three cheers for Colonel George and his lady! Hip, hip—

ALL
Hurray!

POSEY
Hip, hip—

ALL
Hurray!

POSEY
Hip, hip—

ALL
Hurray!

WASHINGTON
Neighbours, my friends, in the name of Mistress Washington and myself, I return your welcome. The gates

of Mt. Vernon shall always swing both ways—inward, to welcome our neighbours; outward, to carry our neighbourly Godsend as far as the road winds. And now happily our wishes are granted us, within and without. These personal joys are sanctified by public peace. (*Murmurs from the* GUESTS: *"Amen!" "Praise be for that!" etc.*)

Our country, too, holds house-warming: her long wars are over. We have offered her our lives in battle for the only goal free men of America will fight for—unrankling peace.

(*The* GUESTS: *"Hear, hear!" "You've won it for us, Colonel!" etc.*)

And so, on this gracious May night, the repose of a great continent likens the repose of our hearts: no bloody massacres impend; no cries of persecution call us to take arms. Here, at last, we are camped at home, where now we may set our bayonets as chimney-spits to turn roast fowl; and our swords in scythe-handles, to trim a dancing-green; and practise our marching orders—in a Virginia reel.

(*The* GUESTS: *"The reel!" "On with the reel!"* WASHINGTON *turns, with a bow, to* MARTHA.)

How say you, Patsy—are we partners?

MARTHA

Partners, George—as long as the Fiddler shall play.

WASHINGTON

Ho, then, Master Fiddler, strike up: and mind you don't stop—short o' doomsday! (*From his raised place beside the two* CHILDREN, *the* FIDDLER *flourishes his bow, and puts fiddle to chin. In the background, the Negroes look on, grinning and excited. Choosing partners, the Guests take places for a Virginia reel*—GEORGE *and* MARTHA WASHINGTON *as first couple. At stroke of the fiddle, they begin joyously to dance, and—spangling the lantern-lit dark—dance on, while the Curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

TWO BLIND MEN AND A DONKEY

by Mathurin Dondo

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TWO BLIND MEN AND A DONKEY

CHARACTERS, COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES

The TWO BLIND MEN, *in ragged accoutrement, stand in the public square begging for alms. Each leans on a staff, with one hand outstretched for the collecting of coin, a professional attitude which seems difficult for them to abandon even in the absence of a prospective client. Their voices, important assets in the art of begging, are lightly trained to attract the commiseration of the most indifferent passer-by. With their pitiful whimpering and lamentable drone, they could soften the heart of the most callous usurer. But in moments of relaxation from business, their voices become quite natural in tone and expression.*

The COMEDIAN *belongs to that wandering tribe of mummers, carefree vagabonds who go from place to place living by their wits as much as by their accomplishment as tumblers, jugglers, actors, and playwrights. In every respect he is theatrical—in dress, in gesture, in countenance, in speech, in manners. An exaggerated plume dangles from his broad hat over his shoulder. Over his doublet is thrown a bright colored cloak, which permits him to wrap himself in its voluminous folds, toga fashion.*

The DONKEY DRIVER *may be imagined as a typical yokel—red hair, a small face with squirrel eyes, turned up nose, broad mouth, outstretched ears. He is always ready to play a coarse joke on innocent bystanders and to express*

NOTE. A French elaboration of the theme of this play is available in the author's book, published by D. C. Heath and Company, with whose permission the English elaboration was prepared.

his amusement by uncontrolled laughter. His gullible disposition measures up to his narrow wit.

The INNKEEPER'S *physical appearance does full justice to the abundance of his cellar and to the quality of his cuisine. Combining the functions of cook with those of manager, he wears the traditional cap and white apron, whose strings underline the amplitude of his person. Gruff and adamant when it is a question of collecting his dues, he possesses all the traits of sociability and good companionship appreciated by his customers.*

And at last we introduce the DONKEY, *who is not the least of our worthy personages. Whatever mask is used by his human substitute, our* DONKEY *must reveal his asinine nature with the utmost significance. His chief attribute, of course, resides in his voice, a voice so vibrant, so potent, so clamorous, so imperious as to awaken the echoes of ten surrounding countries. When his human friends attempt to vie with his braying, their untrained vocal cords betray them at once as pale imitators.*

PROPERTIES: *A donkey's mask; a halter for the donkey; a bench; a sign over the inn—"The Green Dragon"; a hitching post to stand before the inn.*

CHARACTERS

THE COMEDIAN
THE FIRST BLIND MAN
THE SECOND BLIND MAN
THE DONKEY DRIVER
THE INNKEEPER
THE DONKEY

The SCENE *is the public square of a quaint town of medieval France. To the left is shown an inn with the sign of the Green Dragon, and to the right, one perceives the shadowy arch of a monumental gate. There is a stone*

bench by the gate, under a little shrine. In the background, we get a glimpse of tortuous streets and protruding gables.

As the curtain rises, the TWO BLIND MEN *may be seen standing in their professional attitude, motionless, silent, and expectant. Within a short time, the* COMEDIAN *enters, and at once the* TWO BLIND MEN *practice their art on him.*

FIRST BLIND MAN (*in a droning whimper*)
Charity, if you please, for the love of God and our Lady, the blessed Virgin Mary.

SECOND BLIND MAN (*in the same tone*)
Charity, if you please, my good people, for sweet mercy's sake in the name of the great Saint Martin, our glorious patron.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Have pity on a poor blind man who lost his sight in battle against the Saracens. Ave Maria. . . .
(*He mumbles a prayer.*)

SECOND BLIND MAN
Have pity on a poor man born blind who will pray for your soul and for your happiness. Ave Maria. . . .
(*Same action.*)

COMEDIAN
My good folks, if you ask me for pity, I give it to you from the fullness of my heart. If you ask for money, all I can give you is the blessing of the Lord. I myself am a poor beggar.

FIRST BLIND MAN
You filthy beggar, get away from here.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Away with you. No beggar has a right to stand here.

COMEDIAN
Is it by special privilege of our King that you both claim exclusive right to this place?

FIRST BLIND MAN
I have been doing business on this corner for over thirty years. No one shall dispute me this place.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Since the Pope rode through this gate on his way to Avignon, I have not left this spot. Let no beggar interfere with my trade.

COMEDIAN
My friends, I do not pretend to encroach upon your valuable territory. What I told you was all in jest.

FIRST BLIND MAN
You should not mock a poor blind man.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Those who mock the blind shall weep bitterly.

COMEDIAN
I am a jester by profession and cannot help my little jest, but God forbid, my words convey no mockery. Pray tell me, good friends, can you recommend a good inn in this town?

FIRST BLIND MAN
There is an inn on the corner good enough for a king.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Noble lords and rich merchants feast daily at the sign of the Green Dragon.

COMEDIAN
The Green Dragon is then not unworthy of serving a comedian of my reputation. But, my dear friends, I confess that my purse is just now as flat as my stomach, and both need refilling. I shall trust to my wits and to your

good prayers, and, with the help of God, may the Green Dragon be kind and propitious.
(*The Comedian goes out.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN
Pierre!

SECOND BLIND MAN
What!

FIRST BLIND MAN
Have you made a few pennies?

SECOND BLIND MAN
Not a farthing. And you?

FIRST BLIND MAN
Nothing. And I have been standing in this place since early mass.

SECOND BLIND MAN
I am hungry. It must be dinner time.

FIRST BLIND MAN
For me it is rather breakfast time. I haven't tasted a morsel to-day.

SECOND BLIND MAN
'Tis dinner time, I say. It begins to smell good at the inn over there.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Yes, it smells like roast goose.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Suppose we draw near, we can better relish its flavor.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Yes, let's go nearer. Go first, Pierre. You have a surer nose than I.
(*They draw near the inn.*)

SECOND BLIND MAN (*taking a deep sniff*)
Um . . . ah! . . . this is the cabbage soup. How does it suit your taste?

First Blind Man (*sniffing*)
Um . . . ah. . . . 'Tis just the kind I like.

Second Blind Man (*imitating some one who laps up his soup*)
Ah! it does me good. It goes straight to the heart.

First Blind Man (*in the same way*)
Ah! isn't that fine! It is not every day that one tastes soup like that.

Second Blind Man
No, verily.
(*They continue their imaginary lapping for awhile.*)

Second Blind Man
Enough of the soup, here comes the goose.
(*He sniffs violently.*)

First Blind Man
I have not done yet with my soup.

Second Blind Man
Now for the goose, do you hear? If you care for any, you had better hurry.

First Blind Man (*sniffs strongly, deep sighs of delight between each draught*)

Second Blind Man (*does the same*)
Stuffed goose.

First Blind Man
Stuffed.

Second Blind Man
Yes, with chestnuts. Haven't you got a nose?

First Blind Man (*sniffing*)
You are right. Chestnuts.

Second Blind Man (*smacking his tongue*)
Niam, niam. . . . Taste that, I tell you.

First Blind Man (*same way*)
Niam, niam. . . . Zounds! I wager that the Pope never tasted the like.

SECOND BLIND MAN

Here, old man, be not so greedy. You're getting more than your share, it is not right.

(*Sound of footsteps.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN

Some one is coming. Eh, Pierre, a client!

(*The two blind men resume their begging attitude.*)

SECOND BLIND MAN

Charity, if you please, for sweet mercy's sake in the name of Saint Martin, our most blessed patron.

FIRST BLIND MAN

Charity, if you please, in the name of our Lord and the Holy Virgin.

(*The* DONKEY *enters through the City Gate and steps toward the blind men.*)

SECOND BLIND MAN

Have pity on a poor blind man who will pray for your soul and your good health.

FIRST BLIND MAN

Have pity on a poor blind man who will pray to the Lord to bless your children and grandchildren.

(*The* DONKEY *approaches the* FIRST BLIND MAN, *stops, and licks his outstretched hand.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN

Thank you, my good Lady, may God requite you!

(*The* FIRST BLIND MAN *on feeling the* DONKEY *pushes him with his stick. The beast goes to the next man and acts in the same way.*)

SECOND BLIND MAN

Thank you, my child, God's blessing be on you.

(*Same movements. The* DONKEY *walks off and goes out to the right.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN

Pierre!

SECOND BLIND MAN
Well?

FIRST BLIND MAN
You have been caught.

SECOND BLIND MAN
So have you.

FIRST BLIND MAN
You couldn't see through it.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Neither could you.

FIRST BLIND MAN
What was it?

SECOND BLIND MAN
'Twas a cow.

FIRST BLIND MAN
You idiot, 'twas a dog.

SECOND BLIND MAN
It's a cow, I tell you.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Cow yourself, I tell you it's a dog.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Dog yourself. You are more stupid than you are blind. You couldn't distinguish your nose from your thigh.

FIRST BLIND MAN
You threefold idiot, tell me if you can distinguish my stick from my boot?
(*Both sticks strike the air, right and left, and the following could be heard—each speaking alternately.*)

FIRST AND SECOND BLIND MEN
Take that . . . take this . . . lousy . . . scabby . . . thief . . . cheat . . . pagan . . . devil. . . .
(*The* DONKEY'S *powerful braying is heard. The two blind men stop fighting.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN
A donkey!

SECOND BLIND MAN
A donkey!

FIRST BLIND MAN
I knew quite well it was a donkey.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Egad, anybody would know it was a donkey.

FIRST BLIND MAN
I had only been joking.

SECOND BLIND MAN
I pretended that I did not know.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Whoever deceives me must be pretty sharp.

SECOND BLIND MAN
And cleverer still who gulls me.
(*Steps are heard. The blind men resume their begging.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN
Charity, if you please, for the love of God and his blessed mother, the Virgin Mary.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Charity, if you please, for the love of God and our glorious Saint Martin.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Ave Maria . . . *etc.*

SECOND BLIND MAN
Ave Maria . . . *etc.*
(*The* DONKEY DRIVER *enters through the City Gate and comes toward the blind men.*)

DONKEY DRIVER
Good day, my friends. Have you perchance seen a donkey pass this way?

FIRST BLIND MAN
My good sir, I am a poor blind man. Charity, if you please, for the love of God.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Have pity on a poor man born blind who will pray for your soul.

DONKEY DRIVER
Oh, I must change my wording. Have you perchance heard a donkey pass by here a little while ago?

FIRST BLIND MAN
There passes many a beast through this place, my good sir.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Beasts of all ranks and sorts pass by here, and we poor blind cannot always distinguish them.

DONKEY DRIVER
If you can tell me in what direction my donkey has gone, I will give you a generous reward.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Sure enough, my master, your donkey passed this way.

SECOND BLIND MAN
I noticed him first.

FIRST BLIND MAN
No, you didn't, it is I.

SECOND BLIND MAN
He lies. I heard him first. He could not distinguish a donkey from an elephant.

DONKEY DRIVER
Do not quarrel, my good people. You shall both have a share in the reward. Tell me, which way did my beast go?

FIRST BLIND MAN (*pointing to the right*)
This way, my lord.

SECOND BLIND MAN (*pointing in the opposite direction*)
This way, my prince.

DONKEY DRIVER
How long since?

FIRST BLIND MAN
Oh, fully a half an hour ago.

SECOND BLIND MAN
A half an hour! He does not know what he is saying. Five minutes, my prince. I would lie if I said one minute more or less. Five minutes, my prince.
(*The* DONKEY *is heard braying.*)

DONKEY DRIVER
Very well, my friends, thank you. I have promised you a reward. Here, take this. It is a fine gold ducat. (*Turns his back to them and gives them nothing.*) Share this between you!

FIRST BLIND MAN
Thank you, my lord, thank you. May God give it back to you a hundredfold.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Thank you, my glorious prince, may God bless you.
(*The* DONKEY DRIVER *goes out.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN
May all the saints of heaven give you protection. Ave Maria. . . .

SECOND BLIND MAN
I shall pray to the Lord for the salvation of your soul. Ave Maria. . . .
(*A pause.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN
Pierre!

SECOND BLIND MAN
What?

First Blind Man
Suppose we go there?

Second Blind Man
Where?

First Blind Man
To the inn.

Second Blind Man
To the Green Dragon?

First Blind Man
Of course.

Second Blind Man
To eat the goose?

First Blind Man
Yes, the stuffed goose.

Second Blind Man
To eat for fair.

First Blind Man
Naturally for fair, to eat your fill, to eat with your mouth and not only with your nose.

Second Blind Man
And shall we have a drink?

First Blind Man
We shall have a drink and a good one, too.

Second Blind Man
Look here, old man, that will cost us dear.

First Blind Man
What of it, we have the money?

Second Blind Man
Yes, we have a goodly sum, a ducat. For a ducat we can feast. You bet there is enough to guzzle and guttle. Once in a life time, that is not too often.

FIRST BLIND MAN

We shall eat like princes.

SECOND BLIND MAN

And drink like bishops.

(*The two blind men enter the inn and disappear. Enter the* DONKEY DRIVER *with the* DONKEY. *He walks toward the inn, pulling his animal by the halter and bursting into laughter at each step.*)

DONKEY DRIVER

Gittup, you blockhead, gittup. Hi, hi, ha, ha, ho, ho. What a fine trick I played on those blind men! Ha, ha, ho, ho. They imagine I gave them a ducat, hi, hi! Gittup, you ass, gittup. I gave them nothing, not even a penny. They have gone to the inn, I'll wager, and ordered a good dinner. I'll go in myself and enjoy the fun. Hi, hi. . . ! It will be interesting to watch them get their bill. Ho, ho! Gittup. I'll tie you up here while I go inside and watch the fun.

(*He ties the* DONKEY *to the hitching post and disappears in the inn. The* COMEDIAN *enters.*)

COMEDIAN

It's a fine joke and cleverly played. From my shaded seat under the gate I have witnessed the little comedy, and I declare that this donkey driver is an artist of great merit. Ladies and gentlemen, I am a comedian, a wandering comedian and have traveled in all the provinces of France and Navarre. But I must confess that a merrier farce was never played. This donkey driver has won my full admiration, and now, ladies and gentlemen, with your kind permission, I shall make him the hero of a farce of my own. (*He draws near the* DONKEY *and pets the animal while addressing it.*) Nice donkey, pretty donkey! (*The* DONKEY *shows signs of animosity.*) Here, here, be a good boy, little brother. Don't you think we look alike, just a little? (*The* DONKEY *nods his head.*)

Yes, you said it. There is a family likeness between us, a little air of shrewdness, I warrant. As I love you, I am going to give you an opportunity to change your diet. You're as lean as I am, yes, you are. Working too hard? (*The* DONKEY *nods his head in affirmation.*) And not much to eat? (*The* DONKEY *shakes his head.*) Just like me. Wait but a moment, my little brother, if I am not mistaken your fate shall be improved.

(*The* INNKEEPER *appears on the doorstep and calls out to the blind men inside.*)

INNKEEPER

If you don't pay at once, I'll call the police!

(*Through the open door of the inn, the two blind men are heard quarreling.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN

It is you who got the ducat, you thief.

SECOND BLIND MAN

You're a liar. He gave it to you. I am sure of it. Pay, you rascal, do you want us to go to jail?

FIRST BLIND MAN

You pay yourself, bandit, or I'll thrash you.

SECOND BLIND MAN

I'll knock your head off first, if you don't give that ducat.

(*Blows, cries, general scramble.* INNKEEPER *shuts the door of the inn and runs across the stage in great excitement.*)

INNKEEPER

Police, police! Thief, thief, police!

COMEDIAN

What is the matter?

INNKEEPER

Go and call a policeman, quick, quick. There are two thieves in my inn, two blind men. They ordered a big dinner with wine and now they refuse to pay.

COMEDIAN

Don't get excited, master, you shall be paid for your dinner. How much do they owe you?

INNKEEPER

A ducat, sir, they owe me a ducat. They ate a whole goose and drank two bottles of my best wine.

COMEDIAN

A ducat? Bah, that is a mere trifle. I take it upon myself to reimburse you.

INNKEEPER

Really? You are too kind, sir. They do not deserve it. They're two bandits, thieves they are and they ought to be hanged.

COMEDIAN

Listen, master. You see this fine donkey. How much is it worth to you?

INNKEEPER

I don't care for your donkey. I want to be paid for my dinner.

COMEDIAN

Gently, my friend, gently. By all the saints of the calendar, your dinner shall be paid for. But, I say, here is a fine looking beast. You could not find its like in the whole kingdom of France.

INNKEEPER

Indeed, a sorrier looking beast it would be hard to find anywhere.

COMEDIAN

Ah, my dear sir, I pray you, do not judge this animal by its outward appearance. By my faith, it is a most wonderful creature. I know many a man who does not come up to it in intelligence. Would you believe it, sir? That donkey can churn butter.

INNKEEPER (*in a crescendo of admiration*)
Is that so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. And sing the baby to sleep.

INNKEEPER
Is that so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. And draw water from the well.

INNKEEPER
Is that so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. And keep the beggars away.

INNKEEPER
Is that so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. And protect you from the plague.

INNKEEPER
Is that so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. And tell an honest wife from an unfaithful one.

INNKEEPER
You don't say so?

COMEDIAN
Yes, sir. Now watch him. (*The* DONKEY *wags his tail.*) See him wag his tail? That means: "Look out, master, some one is trying to cheat you."

INNKEEPER
Those two rogues of blind men!

COMEDIAN
Perhaps so, sir. Watch him again. Do you see his head shaking wisely? (*The* DONKEY *shakes his head.*) That

means: "Beware, some young man is paying attention to your wife."

INNKEEPER

That young scholar again, I wager. I always distrusted that blond pup. I'll make him pay for it.

COMEDIAN

Yes, sir, this donkey is almost human. I would not sell him for any amount of money, not even for his weight in gold. For that would be a sin. I have made the vow of poverty. I have renounced all worldly possessions as I am on my way to enter the monastery. What shall I do with my beloved donkey? I cannot give him away to the first stranger for fear the precious animal might be ill treated. But here I find you, you with a noble, gentle and generous soul. You are the man who can understand my donkey, treat him with kindness and value his services. Take him, sir, he is yours. I give him away for charity's sake. He will more than pay for the blind men's dinners.

INNKEEPER

Do you really wish to give the beast away?

COMEDIAN

He is yours for the taking.

INNKEEPER

I'll take him. Rest assured that I'll take good care of him. But look here, won't you come in and have a dinner? I have some fine roast goose to-day, and my wine is not to be despised. I'll give you of my best.

COMEDIAN

You know, kind sir, that I am bound to fasting and abstinence, but just to please you, I accept your invitation.

INNKEEPER

Well, my friend, come in, come in! I want you to taste one of my old bottles.

COMEDIAN

Allow me first to put the donkey in your stable. This beast is so attached to me that, if I venture a step away from him, he starts braying nigh enough to split your head. So it is best, you understand, to put him away at once and then we won't be disturbed. Where is your stable?

INNKEEPER

In the rear to your right. Hurry up, I am going to serve you a good hot dinner at once. (*The* COMEDIAN *goes out with the* DONKEY. *The* INNKEEPER *opens the door of the inn and calls out from the steps to the* BLIND MEN.) Begone from here! (*The two blind men stumble out.*) Give thanks to the Lord for having sent a generous soul to pay for your dinners, but don't ever set foot in my house again. Be off, hurry along.

FIRST BLIND MAN

Thank you, sir, may the Lord requite you.

SECOND BLIND MAN

Thank you, master, thank you, may the Lord reward you. (*The* INNKEEPER *reënters the inn.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN

Pierre, tell me the truth, you have the ducat, confess it.

SECOND BLIND MAN

I told you a hundred times, I haven't got it. He gave it to you, thief that you are.

FIRST BLIND MAN

Now, now, haven't we had enough of quarreling?

SECOND BLIND MAN

Yes, and enough of thrashing.

FIRST BLIND MAN

You nearly split my head.

SECOND BLIND MAN

You nearly broke my back.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Now, then, let's have peace.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Yes, peace.

FIRST BLIND MAN
We have dined well, we need calm to digest well.

SECOND BLIND MAN
You are right, let us keep calm. Anyway, I dislike discussions after a good dinner.

FIRST BLIND MAN
Let's go over there and sit on the bench.

SECOND BLIND MAN
Yes, let us sit down.
(*The* TWO BLIND MEN *withdraw underneath the gate. The* COMEDIAN *enters, puts his head in the halter, ties himself to the ring in the post, and stations himself there motionless, his head bowed, facing the wall of the inn.*)

DONKEY DRIVER (*appears at the door, convulsed with laughter*)
Hi, hi, ha, ha, ho, ho.

COMEDIAN (*imitating the braying of a donkey*)
Hee, haw!

DONKEY DRIVER (*turning around at the noise*)
My donkey, where is my donkey? Escaped again?

COMEDIAN (*braying once more*)
Hee, haw!

DONKEY DRIVER
Are you making fun of me? Where is my beast?

COMEDIAN (*in a hypocritical tone of voice*)
My good master, do not be angry. God's will be done! I am your donkey.

DONKEY DRIVER
Hey, what? Are you crazy?

COMEDIAN

For mercy's sake, listen to me, my venerable master. I am your donkey, but by the grace of God, I have become a man again.

DONKEY DRIVER

Mercy on me! What do I hear? Am I being punished for having mocked the poor?

COMEDIAN

My excellent master, I shall relate to you my lamentable story. May God pardon me! When I was living with my mother, I was very wicked and disobedient. I would never do what my dear mother wished. My days were spent in gambling and drinking, while my poor mother nigh killed herself with work. At last, my dear mother lost patience with me and put me out of her house and threw this curse upon me. "Begone," she said, "leave my house. You are but an ass. Go and live among the asses. Go and live and work like an ass for five years, five months, five days, five hours." And the curse fell upon me and I at once changed into an ass. For five years, five months, five days and five hours, I have lived and worked like a donkey. But at this very moment the term of the malediction has expired, and I have changed back into my human form. God be praised!

DONKEY DRIVER

Holy Mary! Is it possible? I had you for six months as a donkey and I never suspected you were a man.

COMEDIAN

Six months in your service, true enough. And I thank you for your kind treatment. I beg your pardon if at times I have been a bit stubborn.

DONKEY DRIVER

It is I who ask your pardon for having beaten you so often. But how was I to know? Why didn't you inform me that you were a man?

COMEDIAN

That could not be. However, you have shown yourself very kind to me, more so than I deserved, and I hope that we may separate as friends.

DONKEY DRIVER

Certainly, certainly, we shall remain good friends. Do come to my house, there will be a good dinner for you.

COMEDIAN

I beg to be excused. I must be off on a pilgrimage to Rome to receive my absolution from our most Holy Father, and I must fast until the end of my journey.

DONKEY DRIVER

Here, take this little change. It may be of use to you on your long journey. Take it.
(*Gives him some money.*)

COMEDIAN

I thank you, my good master, may God requite you!
(*Suddenly begins to bray.*) Hee, haw!

DONKEY DRIVER

Heavens, what is happening now?

COMEDIAN

It is nothing. Only a habit of my donkey life. I shall have some difficulty in getting rid of it, but in time, it will pass. Good-by, my dear master.

DONKEY DRIVER

Good-by, my friend, may the Lord take care of you.
(*The* DONKEY DRIVER *goes out. The* TWO BLIND MEN *who had been mute witnesses to this scene draw near and join in the braying.*)

FIRST BLIND MAN, SECOND BLIND MAN, COMEDIAN (*in turn*)

Hee, haw!

COMEDIAN

My friends, I beg your indulgence for having made an ass of myself. I am indebted to you for recommending to my attention the inn of the Green Dragon. The goose was excellent, the wine unequaled. And now I shall leave you to ply your flourishing trade by this gate, for I must wander on, to show my wits and follies throughout the land of *la belle France*.

CURTAIN

WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS

A Dramatic Action in Two Scenes

by Percy Mackaye

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Dramatic Action here printed is an excerpt only of the complete Ballad Play by Percy MacKaye, in three acts and a prologue, entitled, "Washington, the Man Who Made Us," published by Alfred A. Knopf, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York City; and this excerpt comprises the Tenth and Twelfth Actions, together with the Eighth and Ninth Transitions, of the Third Act of that three-act play. A Note to this effect should be printed, at the head of the Cast of Characters, in all amateur performances given of this Action; and the author requests that two copies of the program be sent, with press notices, to him at his address, Harvard Club, New York City.

The music and words of the four ballads included in the text of this Action ("Fighter Would A-fiddling Go," "Down by the Cold Hill-Sidey," "Gypsy Davy," and "I've Lost My Heart to Betsy"), with illustrations by Arvia MacKaye, are published by the H. W. Gray Co., 159 East 48th Street, New York City, and may be obtained through Samuel French.

The ballad music indeed is an important and essential feature of the whole performance, to which its appropriate rendition will supply elements of charm and dramatic variety. In the Finale especially—in case an ensemble tableau is preferred to the effects described in the stage directions—a resourceful stage-manager will know how variously to adapt the ending to his acting material, in mass effects of pageantry surrounding the Flag, wherein the acting participants may, if desired, join their voices to those of Quilloquon and the Children in the melodiously rhythmic refrain of the Ballad of Betsy Ross.

WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS

CHARACTERS AND SCENES

SCENE I

PLACE: *In a scene loft, at the Old South Theatre, Philadelphia.*
TIME: *Winter of* 1778.

A SCENE-SHIFTER—QUILLOQUON
TWO CHILDREN WITH PAINT-POTS—THE BOY AND THE GIRL
CAPTAIN JOHN ANDRÉ
GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE
GENERAL KNYPHAUSEN
POLLY REDMOND
BETSY ROSS

TRANSITION

QUILLOQUON—*sings, to dulcimer*
Ballad: "Down by the Cold Hill-Sidey."
Ballad: "Gypsy Davy."

SCENE II

SCENE: *A triumphal Archway.*
PLACE *and* TIME: *Philadelphia, Spring of* 1778.

A RAGGED SINGER—QUILLOQUON
"A KNIGHT" (CAPTAIN ANDRÉ)
"A LADY" (POLLY REDMOND)
THREE SOLDIERS
A BUGLER—QUILLOQUON
WASHINGTON
LAFAYETTE

HAMILTON
PRESIDENT LAURENS
OFFICERS
CIVILIANS
BETSY ROSS

FINALE

Ballad: "Betsy Ross."

QUILLOQUON *sings and dances.*
THE CHILDREN *sing refrain and dance with him.*

SCENE I

Behind blue curtains, which meet at the center, is heard a fiddle playing, to the voice of QUILLOQUON *singing.*

Immediately, as the blue curtains draw back half the width of the stage opening, a burst of gorgeous color meets the eye.

In a scene of shallow depth, the entire back wall consists of a resplendent painted canvas, in front of which, at the right, is a step-ladder.

On this is standing a YOUNG MAN, *clad in a British officer's uniform. At either side of him, standing on boxes, are a* BOY *and a* GIRL, *each holding a pot of paint. The* YOUNG MAN—*slender, handsome, dark—holds several brushes, with one of which he is busily putting final touches to the design on the canvas.*

At left and right, the scene is closed in by great folds of blue hanging curtains, on which—informally pinned—are drawings and paintings of scene-designs.

In a great chair (right), over which is thrown a rich hued tapestry, sits a stout MIDDLE-AGED MAN, *in the uniform of a British General. Near him, standing, is a tall man, with fierce black beard, long moustachios, towering brass helmet and the uniform of a Hessian officer.*

In the left background—in front of some tall decorated screens—stands a fiddler (QUILLOQUON), *dressed in a strange bright-colored smock, worn over his work clothes.*

The two CHILDREN *are clad likewise, and—where they stand holding the paint-pots—join in the chorus of the ballad-song, to which* QUILLOQUON *partly fiddles—partly directs them with his bow—as he sings.*

Midway of the song's first stanza the curtains part.

THE FIDDLER

A fighter would a-fiddling go;
Instead of his sword he carried a bow,
All for to fiddle it high and low
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

FIDDLER AND CHILDREN

Jackie, boy!—Master!
Sing ye well?—very well!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

To my Hey down, down!
With my Ho down, down!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

FIDDLER

He fiddled all day until 'twas night,
He fiddled all dark until 'twas light,
All for to fiddle away the fight
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

FIDDLER AND CHILDREN

Jackie, boy!—Master!
Sing ye well?—very well!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

(*As the song concludes, the* BRITISH OFFICER, *slapping his thigh, exclaims loudly:*)

BRITISH OFFICER

Bravo, Master Scene-shifter! You sing well, with your Jackie-boy, and Jill, too. (*To the* YOUNG MAN *on the ladder.*) Where did you pick up this fellow?

THE YOUNG MAN

Oh, here in the theatre, General: a jack-of-all-trades. He helps me here in the scene-loft. (*Pointing.*) How do you like our new curtain, for the Old South?

BRITISH OFFICER

Prodigious good! A touch of extravagance that takes me. Your brush is as gallant as your sword, Captain André.

THE YOUNG MAN (*turns with a smile and slight bow*)

Sir William Howe does me honor.

HOWE

Devil a bit! I saw your new drop-scene at the last performance—that landscape and cascade. Hogarth himself couldn't beat it. And so this is the new curtain for tomorrow night?

ANDRÉ

Yes, General. 'Tis just finished. (*Tossing his brushes to* QUILLOQUON, *he comes down the ladder, while* QUILLOQUON *and the* CHILDREN *go off through the curtains, right.*)

HOWE

What's the play?

ANDRÉ

"Douglas."

HOWE

Who plays the title-part?

ANDRÉ

I do, Sir.

HOWE

Well said, youngster! You'll provide my staff with Garrick and Sir Joshua combined. Who gives the Prologue?

ANDRÉ

I plead very guilty, Sir. I've wrote it.

HOWE

What—Oliver Goldsmith, too! Sure, Captain André, I must raise your rank to Major of Dramatics.

ANDRÉ (*laughing*)

'Twould be only fitting, Sir William. You yourself, Sir, have converted the theatre of Mars to the temple of Melpomone. Thanks to you, Philadelphia is now the Athens of America.

HESSIAN OFFICER (*with a strong German accent*)

Ya—so. Here is now goot vinter quarters: plendy of goot music and liquors.

HOWE

And sour-krout, Knyphausen! Better than Trenton, a year ago, eh? How about that serenade the Yankees gave you Hessians o' Christmas night—ha? (HOWE *roars with laughter.*)

KNYPHAUSEN

De tamn Yankees dey eat deir own medicine now, General. You hear de last news from Valley Forge—ya?

HOWE

Eh?—What news?

KNYPHAUSEN

Meester Vashington he is now tie up his breeches mit wrapping strings. For why?—he is cut off his last button, to buy him a frozen potato.—Haha!

HOWE

Ha! Hath he? Well, well, poor old fox, he shall have a hot sirloin—when I catch him. He's a gentleman and a sportsman—George Washington. Next spring—after I've frozen out his little rebellion—he and I shall go duck-shooting together. 'Tis jollier sport than this man-hunting.

KNYPHAUSEN

Sport! Ya—dere you are, you Anglo-Saxons! Always you *play* your var—by de pretty rules, like a game.

HOWE
A game, well, what the devil else is war?

KNYPHAUSEN
Var is business, Sir Villiam.

HOWE
Business be damned! War is a great national sport, sir. Learn the rules and play according. (*Rising.*) Knyphausen, I'm captain of this cricket match. When the boys in your country learn bat-and-ball, they'll learn to understand British soldiers; aye, sir, and American.—Now, André, I clean forgot: I must be off.

ANDRÉ
So soon, General?

HOWE
I've lost my dog. God above, sir, Jack! my best hound —I've lost him. Took first prize at the show. I wouldn't swap him for a battalion. I must set the town in search. (*Taking out and handing a paper.*) Here, Knyphausen, you have legs—hurry ahead of me to Headquarters. This paper gives his full inventory.—Superb foxhound—good old Jack! Aye, sir,—a dozen battalions!

KNYPHAUSEN (*taking the paper*)
For vone dog! (*Scowling with savage disdain.*) Gotteswillen!—Vat for a var! (*As he is about to stride out through the curtains, left, two young women appear there—one in a bright-colored gown, the other dressed in grey like a Quaker. Seeing the* HESSIAN, *they start aside —the first suppressing a scream, as* KNYPHAUSEN, *bowing fiercely, brushes rudely past and goes out, muttering.*) Pardon, Mesdames!

FIRST YOUNG WOMAN
O—Captain André!

ANDRÉ
Mistress Polly—ladies!

POLLY (*looking after* KNYPHAUSEN)
Why is one of *those* here?

HOWE (*bursting out*)
God knows, Madam! His Majesty hired 'em, not me. Manners of mud-turtles! That one is a colonel, but he butters his bread with his thumb.—Pray introduce me, Captain.

ANDRÉ
Sir William—I present you to Mistress Polly Redmond, and—

POLLY
And my friend—Captain—Mistress Betsy Ross: both loyal *rebels,* Sir William!

HOWE (*bowing, as they both curtsy*)
I bow to your conquest, fair enemies!

POLLY
Oh, but Captain, I've only a minute. I've run in to give you my answer.

ANDRÉ
Ah! So you *will* sing for us tomorrow night—before my Prologue?

POLLY
All my repertoire!

ANDRÉ
I am overwhelmed.

POLLY
You *will* be—when you hear me! (*Handing a paper.*) Look at my numbers.

ANDRÉ (*reads*)
"War and Washington," "Cooped up in a Town," "Burgoyne's Defeat"— (*Bursting into gay laughter.*) Aha, Sir William—you hear? Reserve your box early! 'Twill be a royal benefit—for rebels!

HOWE (*joining his laughter*)
Standing room only, I'll wager! Put me down for *two boxes*—(*with another bow*)—if Mistress Betsy will be there to join the rebellion.

BETSY
I thank thee, Sir; but 'tis the privilege of a Friend to be neutral. I attend not the playhouse.

HOWE
Neutral? Never with those eyes, fair Mistress! Nay, under that grey cloak of a Friend, I warrant you'll draw forth a shining blade for Washington!

BETSY
Only a needle, Sir. Polly sings for her country: I can only sew. (*Under her cloak is visible a cloth bundle, with needle and thread—through the wrapping of which is glimpsed a gleam of red, white and blue.*)

HOWE (*glancing*)
What's here? (*In confusion* BETSY *covers the bundle and speaks aside to* POLLY.)

BETSY
Polly, speak quick. He must not discover it—the flag of our new country!

POLLY (*saucily to* HOWE, *stepping between him and* BETSY)
'Tis shirts—for Valley Forge soldiers, Sir. Confiscate 'em if you dare—for his Majesty!

HOWE
Ah—unneutral needle! (*Pressing his heart.*) Already, Mistress Betsy, thou hast stabbed me mortally—here. I must fly for help—to Headquarters. (*Going.*) Captain, reserve me my box. Recover my lost heart—and my dog. Dear old Jack! Damn Hessians! Splendid hound! Ladies, your most devoted! Ah—bye the bye! I pray you will all dine with me shortly—to meet the Marquis of Lafayette and General Washington. I'm expecting

'em soon—by pressing invitation. Long live Washington—under my roof! God save the king—and my good old Jack! Worth *twenty* battalions—that dog. (*Limping off on his cane,* HOWE *disappears through the curtains.*)

POLLY
Funny old dragon! (*To* ANDRÉ.) We must be going, too!

ANDRÉ
Nay, charmer of dragons: stay one moment. (*As she waves good-bye to him.*) Not if I show you a secret?

POLLY (*hesitating*)
Secret?

ANDRÉ
A grand state secret.—Behind those screens!

POLLY
Oh!—Stop, Betsy.—'Tis fate! We are—spies! (*Returning, curious.*) I've always felt I should hang for a state secret.

ANDRÉ
So have I, Mistress Polly! Resist not fate!

POLLY (*awesomely*)
Must I swear not to tell?

ANDRÉ
You must swear to tell all Philadelphia—except Sir William.

POLLY (*raising her right hand*)
Swear, Betsy!

ANDRÉ
Look! (*He puts aside the screens, revealing behind them a gorgeous array of dresses, costumes and dyed cloths, hanging over standards.*)

POLLY
O tempter of Eve!—what are those?

ANDRÉ (*taking forth some of the costumes and draping them over the step-ladder*)
For my *Mischianza!*

POLLY
Miss—what?

ANDRÉ
My pageant—the first in America: a medley of masques and music and dances! 'Tis for next spring—in honor of Sir William. Philadelphia shall go arrayed like Tyre and Sidon.

BETSY (*with grave feeling*)
While our patriot army goes naked.—Polly, come away!

ANDRÉ (*showing a robe of white silk, with spangled pink sash*)
Look! This Polonaise—for a Lady of the Blended Rose.

POLLY (*snatching it from him*)
O rapture!

ANDRÉ
'Tis for you, Mistress Polly. Picture yourself in a veil of silver lace, with this headdress of pearls! (*Showing another splendid robe, with bright sash.*) And this—for a Lady of the Burning Mountain:—for your friend, if she will deign to wear it.

BETSY (*turning away*)
I will die before wearing it. (*Glancing again at the red, white and blue of her half-concealed bundle.*) The colors I revere are for an altar—not for a playhouse.

POLLY (*pressing the robe to her heart*)
Captain, I succumb: array me in this robe: shoot me at sunrise, and bury me in a crystal casket—at the feet of my hero, Washington!

BETSY

Polly, thou art gone daft with thy theatre crazes. Living or dead, let us be clothed in our duty.

ANDRÉ

"Living or dead, let me but be renowned!" That's a line I speak tomorrow night, in my part of "DOUGLAS." Ah, dutiful Mistress Ross, do not scorn too much our theatre's art. My duty is soldiering; yours—'tis sewing. Yet it may be that your life-task and mine today—all our hearts' devotion to peace or war—shall survive tomorrow only in a player's part—or the refrain of a song.

BETSY

Duty, sir, thinks not of survival.

POLLY

But beauty longs for it, Betsy. Remember our Washington, even at Valley Forge, hath a theatre—for our starving patriots. They lack for clothes and bread—but not for players.

BETSY (*murmurs*)

Valley Forge!

ANDRÉ

The art we share should heal our enmities. I pray 'twill. (*Dreamily, from nearby, strings of a dulcimer begin to play—a melody pensive and minor.* BETSY, *clutching tighter her bundle, stands gazing—her eyes fixed far off.*)

BETSY (*murmurs again*)

Valley Forge! They are starving now at Valley Forge. (*And now, to the dulcimer, the voice of* QUILLOQUON *is heard singing.*)

VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

She leaned herself against a thorn,
All alone and aloney,
And there her firstling sons were born,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

(POLLY *looks questioningly toward* ANDRÉ, *who answers her look quietly.*)

ANDRÉ
An old ballad.

VOICE OF QUILLOQUON
(*Sings on.*)

She pullèd down her dark, dark hair,
All alone and aloney,
And bound it round their limbs so bare,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

She pullèd out her snow-white breast,
All alone and aloney,
And bid them suck—'twould be her last,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

BETSY (*murmurs*)
The cold hill side. (*She turns toward the curtained entrance.* ANDRÉ *speaks to her.*)

ANDRÉ
Pray, Mistress, wait! We are enemies—only in prose. In the heart of song, my England is yours, your America —mine. May we not be friends?

BETSY
To be a Friend, sir, is my faith. Yet there are times when friendship must be fought for. O Polly—come! (*She goes swiftly out, left.* POLLY *is following.*)

ANDRÉ
And *you—?*

POLLY (*pausing at the entrance, hands back the pearl headdress to* ANDRÉ)
Dear Captain, fate may make us spies—but never traitors.

ANDRÉ (*snatches her hand, kissing it*)
Lady of fate! (*Restraining an impetuous gesture,* POLLY

hurries out. Left alone, ANDRÉ *turns slowly back. The dulcimer is still playing. Looking at the pearls in his hand,* ANDRÉ *murmurs low:*) Spies—but never traitors.

TRANSITION

Through the side curtains, QUILLOQUON *enters with the* CHILDREN. *As they approach, their forms and the figure of* ANDRÉ *melt into greyish darkness, while their voices are singing.*

VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

If God were here, O children mine,
All alone and aloney,
He'd wrap you in the warm wool fine,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

THE CHILDREN

O Mother dear, whose eyes are there,
All alone and aloney,
A-shining through your dark, dark hair,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

QUILLOQUON

If God it were, O children mine,
All alone and aloney,
He'd warm your hearts with His red wine,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

THE CHILDREN

O Mother dear, His milk is best,
All alone and aloney,
That warms us from your snow-white breast,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

(*During this, in complete darkness, the front curtains close, and now, from behind them, there resounds the explosion of a gun. At this sound the mood completely changes.*

Fifes and drums are heard, and a great burst of cheering. Then a louder gun explodes, and—while the curtains are opening in darkness—the voice of QUILLOQUON *rings gaily, to a dance-step tune and rhythm.*)

VOICE OF QUILLOQUON (*sings*)

Gypsy Davy came over the sea,
To his lingo-dingo-dance, sir:
God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,
Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:
God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

(*During this song the dark gradually changes, through dusky greyness, to broad day.*)

SCENE II

The light reveals a scene of fantastic design and vivid color: a triumphal archway, constructed in the form of an arbor.

At the center, back, the arch is festooned with splendid cloth of gold, draped from its central keystone.

Overhead, the arbor roof is hung with tapestries florescent with designs of clustered fruits and flowers.

Under this gorgeous archway, a drab, contrasting group of tattered American soldiers (with sprigs of evergreen in their hats) half surround a ragged singer (QUILLOQUON). *In the background others are seen in excited pantomime.*

During this, from the right, two figures steal out and hasten furtively toward the background. One (POLLY) *is dressed in a gown of white polonaise silk, with pearl headdress and spangled veil; the other* (ANDRÉ) *is clad in a*

great cloak embroidered with coats-of-arms, his face half hidden by a domino mask.

QUILLOQUON (*singing and dancing to his tune*)

Gypsy Davy brought over his squad
With their own true love to lea-d 'em,
For the lass in the heart of every lad
Was the Gypsy-Queen of Free-dom.

Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,
Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:
God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

(*The* SOLDIERS *cheer, and look on laughing as* QUILLOQUON *repeats his clog-dance steps, to the thrumming of his dulcimer.*)

(*Meantime, the figure in the domino mask speaks quick and low to his companion.*)

ANDRÉ

Adorable Mistress Polly, adieu! General Washington and Lafayette have captured the city. General Howe and General Clinton are in full retreat. I must join them. Washington and his Valley Forge rabble are already close by. Philadelphia is lost and my heart with it.—Keep this remnant, in token of a poor soldier of paint pots. (*He cuts off a gold button, kisses it and gives it to her.*)

POLLY

Farewell, Captain André—first soldier-artist of America! Come back to us, when English cousins are friends again. Meantime, we will hate your old king—and adore your young memory.

ANDRÉ (*ardently, removing his mask*)

You—Mistress Polly?

POLLY

Polonaise you were to call me!—See! (*Smiling, she points to her gown.*)

ANDRÉ (*glancing from the gown to the archway*)
Ah! fair phantasy of my Mischianza! A bubble of dreams —'tis burst. But it was beautiful?

POLLY
A triumph for all the Muses! (*In frightened tone, as* SOLDIERS *draw near.*) Quick. Put on your mask. They'll see you. (*The two steal toward the archway, as* QUILLOQUON *resumes his singing with the* SOLDIERS.)

QUILLOQUON
So hark now, every Free-dom's man
And remember long and well, sir:
While David stands with Jon-a-than,
The Devil he'll stay in hell, sir.
(*Dancing and singing with the* SOLDIERS.)
Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,
Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:
God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

(*With this finale,* QUILLOQUON *dances off through the archway, left.*)

POLLY (*in a low voice, to* ANDRÉ)
Escape. Be quick. God speed you!

ANDRÉ (*kissing her hand*)
Till happier days! (*He hurries off, right, in the background. A bugle blows outside. The* SOLDIERS *gather to attention. From the left background, through the archway, a* BUGLER (QUILLOQUON) *enters, followed by a* LITTLE GIRL *and* BOY, *who walk backward strewing flowers before* WASHINGTON, *who comes in, accompanied by* LAFAYETTE, HAMILTON, *and other* OFFICERS. *Behind these more* SOLDIERS *and* CIVILIANS *follow.*)

WASHINGTON (*showing to the* OFFICERS *an open letter in his hand*)
Gentlemen—listen! I have just received by post this let-

ter from our Ambassador, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, in Paris: (*He reads from the letter.*) "I have the honor to inform you that this day the Alliance between France and the United States of America was officially signed and sealed."

HAMILTON AND LAFAYETTE (*in one breath*)
The Alliance!

LAFAYETTE
Ha! Prophecy of my veins!

HAMILTON
Our first ally in the Old World—to unite both worlds for freedom. (WASHINGTON *turns to* LAFAYETTE *and* HAMILTON, *extending both of them his hands. On either side, each seizes his hand and presses it.*)

WASHINGTON
Boys—my sons—young America and new France!

HAMILTON (*with deep ardor*)
Trenton—has led to Paris.

LAFAYETTE
Paris—has come home to Valley Forge!

WASHINGTON
And Valley Forge has driven Howe from Philadelphia! The tide is turning, friends. (*As he is about to pass on,* POLLY *steps forward and, unclasping her necklace, tosses it in* WASHINGTON'S *path, making a low curtsy.*)

WASHINGTON (*pausing with abruptness, bows aloofly*)
Madam— (*To his Orderly,* BILLY.) Restore the lady's possessions.

POLLY (*as* BILLY *lifts the necklace to hand it back*)
Not mine, your Excellency. 'Tis legitimate loot. I have but robbed the plunder chest of Tyranny, to make offering on the altar of Freedom.

WASHINGTON (*with a second bow of stiff politeness*)
A well-meant sentiment, Madam. May I inquire whence you are from?

POLLY (*twinkling*)
From the right bank of the Potomac, General: one o' your Virginia *Jinnies.*

WASHINGTON (*his coldness breaking with a sudden glow*)
My dear young lady—your name?

POLLY
Polly Redmond, of Fairfax County—ten miles from Mt. Vernon.

WASHINGTON (*with outright warmth*)
Mt. Vernon! Dear Mistress Polly—ten times welcome! (*Kissing her hand.*) Your devoted servant. (*Turning to* LAFAYETTE.) Mistress Polly—the Marquis of Lafayette.

LAFAYETTE (*bowing to her hand*)
Chère dame de la Polonaise!

WASHINGTON (*introducing the* CIVILIAN)
And President Laurens—of the United States Congress. (LAURENS *bows.*)

POLLY
Gentlemen of the Army and Congress, welcome home to your Capital. (*Pointing to the shield on the archway.*) You behold! The sunset of General Howe is the rising-sun of Washington. *Vive* the heroes of Valley Forge! But not all of us prisoners in Philadelphia are butterflies like myself—to flutter in your path. I beg leave, sir, to fetch forth from her hiding—a little moth in grey.

WASHINGTON (*smiling*)
A moth, Mistress Polly?

POLLY
A young Quakeress, your Excellency, who spins from her grey cocoon the bright colors of liberty. With that

silk, sir, the stars of your exile, and the stripes of your suffering, she has sewed in a flag for our country. (*Smiling.*) By your own orders, General!

WASHINGTON
Ah! I remember.

POLLY (*calling at the doorstep, left*)
Betsy! Betsy! (*In the doorway appears the young Quakeress, carrying a furled banner. Seizing her gaily by the arm,* POLLY *brings her forward and presents her, with a curtsy.*) Your Excellency and gentlemen—Mistress Betsy Ross, and the first flag of the United States of America! (*Unfurling the flag,* BETSY *steps shyly forward, extending it toward* WASHINGTON. *There, as the Stripes and thirteen Stars float out, the* BUGLER (QUILLOQUON) *blows on his bugle a joyous blast.*)

FINALE

The blast of the bugle dies away in sudden darkness, through which the voice of QUILLOQUON *is heard singing, to an old ballad tune:*

QUILLOQUON
Oh!—I've lost my heart to Betsy,
to Betsy,
to Betsy!

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

(*Now, through a narrow opening of the blue curtains, only the flag, held by* BETSY, *is still visible, and the form of* QUILLOQUON *dancing before it with the two* CHILDREN, *who join in the refrain of the song.*)

Oh—Because she sewed so neatly,
so neatly,
so neatly,

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

(*And now, in the background, the form of the Quakeress has disappeared, and the flag alone flutters like flame against the dark.*)

And—Wherever she waves so sweetly,
so sweetly,
so sweetly,

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

So—Carry me back to Betsy,
to Betsy,
to Betsy,

My heart that's lost
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue!

(*A deep gun resounds. During its reverberations, the blue curtains close.*)

CURTAIN

SOME THERE ARE WHO REMEMBER

by Frank Shay

For
THE 312TH INFANTRY
A.E.F.

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SOME THERE ARE WHO REMEMBER

CHARACTERS

AN OLD MAN
ODETTE, *his daughter, a woman of thirty-five*
JIM DELANEY, *formerly infantry sergeant, A.E.F.*

PLACE: *This is the land of the living dead. No phrase making, no beautiful and limpid sentimentalities, can mitigate its desolation. The aura of death, even if Death itself is never apparent, hangs over the scene. No men till these fields because there are no plowmen and should an audacious man put his plow to this earth his immediate harvest would be death, quick and sudden death. Rubble, shot with barbed wire and rusty bayonets, is the only growth in this soil that was for four years fertilized with human flesh and blood. Poets sing of the flowers that spring from the dead soldier's heart but the flowers grow only in the poet's mind. Birds have ceased to sing, only the hardiest of flowers bloom, only the stoutest hearts roam over these fields. If there is any expression to be found in the contours of the surface it could only be the pitted and wrinkled grin of passionate death.*

Yet, determined men and women have returned to these fields and with their hands, rather than with edged tools, here and there have restored traces of its former beauty. They dare not dig deeply for just beneath the topsoil are the mangled bodies of men, undetonated shells, sharp steel and rusty shrapnel. In the few houses live only women and old and broken men, eking out a slender existence because the soil is their own, because they are

so much a part of this land they could not endure leaving it. Only a great and terrible love could tear them away and the objects of that love are in the ground beneath their feet.

SCENE: *Let me take you to a crossing of the roads. One road carries heavy feet to Nancy, another to the thrice desolated town of Thiacourt. On one side, set slightly off the road, is a peasant's restored cottage. It is nestled in front of a hill, a hill that has traditionally shielded its friends from the dread enemy in the east, a hill that ends abruptly as if to permit the road to pass on to its appointed destination. Across this by-road there is a clump of quick-set, a hawthorn hedge, seemingly touched by inspiration, at least cared for by loving hands. For no other reason could hawthorn grow so beautifully.*

TIME: *All this and only this now that it is ten years since the last shells were fired and the last men spewed out their lives to make this sacred soil, for sacred it is to poet and peasant alike.*

AT RISE: *Before the cottage sits an old man sunning himself in the last fading rays of the September sun. A bundle of bones and memories, useless but still loved. His dim eyes have seen brave deeds both in 1870 and in 1914. There is none who can say that he, too, was not a hero in his own right. He was with Napoleon the Third at Sedan and again he bore brave arms under Dubail at the first Marne. Let him live on in his memories. The rustic bench on which he sits should have a singularly familiar appearance to an American, as well it should have, for American hands built it as well as the table that stands before it. If, for the moment, his memories have failed him his appetite has not.*

OLD MAN

Le souper n'est pas prêt?

Is supper not yet ready?

ODETTE (*from within*)
Tout desuite, mon père.
In just a minute, my father.

OLD MAN
Bon. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?
That is good. What are we having?

ODETTE
Mais, une petite marmite.
What, but a petite marmite.

OLD MAN
Ça va! (*smacks his lips in anticipation*)
Good!

ODETTE (*singing*)
Oh, the Franch they are a fonny race—. (*She stops as she appears at the door bearing a plate of steaming food and a chunk of bread which she places before the* OLD MAN.)
Voilà, mon père.
There, my father.

OLD MAN
Merci, ma fille. Tu ne manges pas?
Thanks, my daughter. But aren't you eating?

ODETTE
J'ai trop chaud. Ça me coupe l'appetit. Tout à l'heure.
It's too hot to eat just now. I'll have it in a minute.

OLD MAN (*tasting the dish appreciatively*)
C'est bon!
It is fine!

ODETTE (*nods her head as she seats herself on the bench beside her father. She is fanning herself with her apron when she pauses and listens attentively.*)
Shhh! Quelqu' un s'approche!
Shhh! Some one is coming!

OLD MAN
Qu'est-ce que c'est? Je ne te comprends pas.
What? I cannot hear you.

ODETTE (*imperatively*)
Shhh!

OLD MAN (*with spoon poised halfway to his lips*)
Qu'est-ce qu'y a?
What is it?

ODETTE (*rising and peering left*)
Oni, on s'approche. C'est un américain!
Yes, some one's coming. It is an American!

OLD MAN (*shrugs his shoulders and goes on eating*)
(*From the left enters* JIM DELANEY. *He is tired and his clothes show the heavy chalk dust of much traveling on French roads. He pauses to wipe the perspiration from his forehead. His hair shows white at the temples and there are heavy lines of pain and worry about his mouth. His gaze meets the cottage and he sees* ODETTE'S *back as she hurriedly enters the house.*)

DELANEY
Looks like it, all right. That hill behind the house. Hell, they all look alike. Let's see? Nancy is in that direction? Yeah. And over there is Thiacourt. We were going through that gully (*pointing to east*). Well, let's ask the old guy. (*He enters the little yard and approaches the* OLD MAN.) Wonder if he understands my kind of French? (*As he is about to speak to the* OLD MAN, ODETTE *appears at the door.* DELANEY *looks at her enquiringly.*)

ODETTE (*softly*)
Jeem? Sergeant Jeem!

DELANEY
Sure, that's me. Jim Delaney!

ODETTE (*with a brave attempt at lightness*)
Sure. Jeem Delaney. You—recognize me?

DELANEY (*after a very slight pause*)
Odette? Gee, you haven't forgotten me, Odette?

ODETTE
Not ever, Jeem. Did you remember me?

ODETTE
Lots o' times, Odette. Gosh! You're a sight for sore eyes!

ODETTE
You have the sore eyes? (*She offers him her hand in a belated greeting.*)

DELANEY
If I did they're cured right now. (*There is a moment of embarrassing silence.*) That your old man?

ODETTE
Yes, my father. Will you have *diner* with us?

DELANEY
Oui, mam'selle. Three beans, eh. (*Rubbing his hands.*) How 'bout some van rouge?

ODETTE
You remember—*vin rouge,* eh, Jeem?

DELANEY
Do I remember them? I'll tell the world I do. (ODETTE *disappears within the house.*) Well, pop, how goes it?

OLD MAN
Pas compris! (*He goes on eating.*)

ODETTE (*returning with two bowls of steaming food places them on the table*)
Voilà, Jeem!

DELANEY
No van rouge?

ODETTE

Van rouge! Van rouge! Always you Americans want van rouge. You sit down and eat. Bimeby, boocoo van rouge! (*She laughs at him as he takes a seat and then returns to the cottage. She reappears almost immediately with a large loaf of bread, glasses and a bottle of wine.*)

DELANEY

Hot stuff, kid. Gee, it's great to be here again! (ODETTE *watches him while he eats, forgetting, for the time, her own food.*)

ODETTE

Jeem! Why do you come back?

DELANEY

I'm looking for something I lost when I was here in nineteen eighteen.

ODETTE

What was it you lost?

DELANEY

Some of my boys. I want to find out what happened to them. Do you know? (ODETTE *is silent for a moment.*)

ODETTE (*wistfully*)

You did not come back because of—me?

DELANEY

Oh, sure, you too. But it's the fellows I want to find first.

ODETTE (*decisively*)

I know nothing!

DELANEY (*roughly*)

Well, they were right here the last time I saw them. You were here, too. Where did they go?

ODETTE

How should I know? They were men, soldiers. They were able to take care of themselves.

DELANEY (*appealing to her*)
Can't you give me some dope on them? Were they ordered away? Did they go A.W.O.L?

ODETTE
I know nothing.

DELANEY
Gees, Odette, if you only knew the hell I've been through these ten years.

ODETTE
And if you knew the hell I've been through, *mon* Jeem. (*She shrugs her shoulders.*) But you would not understand. (*She looks away.*)

DELANEY (*nodding to* OLD MAN)
Does he know?

ODETTE
He knows nothing.

DELANEY (*desperately*)
Some one must know.

ODETTE (*turning on him fiercely*)
What you come back here for, américain? Do you come back only to reopen the old wounds? Can we not have our beautiful memories and our sad ones? Go away!

DELANEY
What do you mean "go away"? Christ, didn't us guys get your homes back for you? (*Waving his hand to the left.*) Aren't there enough of my buddies buried out there to make this mean something to me? I want my boys back.

ODETTE
So do we French want our boys back but we cannot have them. You can go back to America and forget. That we cannot do.

DELANEY
We cannot forget either. At least, I can't forget. They won't let me.

ODETTE
You forgot me quickly enough. You were going to write. You were coming back to—get me and take me with you to America. But you forget easily enough. I couldn't forget. (*Softly.*) No, I've remember—here. (*She places her hand over her heart.*)

DELANEY
But I did write you, Odette.

ODETTE
But one letter and some cards and then—nothing. Now you come back to us for what?

DELANEY
For my boys.

ODETTE
Always taking. There is nothing left here for you to take.

DELANEY
I wish to God I could make you understand.

ODETTE
I understand that I—love you yet.

DELANEY (*tears in his eyes*)
Now that I've seen you again, Odette, I know I still love you. (ODETTE *to cover her emotion gathers up the dishes and takes them into the house. She returns to his side and takes his hand in hers.* DELANEY *unashamedly wipes his eyes on his handkerchief.*)

ODETTE (*softly*)
You are tired, *mon* Jeem?

DELANEY (*looking out over the road*)
This is what I've been looking for, something else I had

lost. This quiet and— (*He draws the woman closer to his side.*) Oh, Odette, I do love you. I had forgotten but now that I know again I am glad. Glad, too— (*Very quietly.*) That I did not take you to America.

ODETTE
Tell me, *mon* Jeem.

DELANEY
You do not know America.

ODETTE
Jeem, I'm so glad you have come back. You remember how you taught me the English back in Nancy? All the time I have studied the English book, for ten years, so that I could understand your country. I talk to everybody I can in English.

DELANEY
You speak English like an American—almost.
(*The* OLD MAN *shrugs his shoulders.*)

ODETTE
Tu ne vas pas faire une somme, toi?
Aren't you going to take a nap?

OLD MAN (*behind his hand*)
Il ne faut lui dire rien.
Tell him nothing.
(*The* OLD MAN *rises shakily to his feet and goes into the house. He takes a seat just inside the door where he can hear* ODETTE *and* DELANEY *talking.*)

ODETTE (*repeating*)
You are very tired *mon* Jeem.

DELANEY
Not the way you think, Odette.

ODETTE
How are you tired?

DELANEY

Oh, I wish you could see it as it is, Odette. But it's so unlike all this.

ODETTE

Please tell me, Jeem.

DELANEY

You've got to go back to the time before we came to France, back to the time when America entered the war. I live in a very small town, smaller than Nancy, much smaller. I was drafted with the other fellows and we were sent to Camp Devons for training. I guess I was pretty lucky in those days; they made me a corporal in no time and then they sent me to a special school to study. I was assigned to the one-pounder cannon, the thirty-seven millimetre. It is a French gun and you remember it: the fellows had theirs with them that day I left them here.

ODETTE

I remember it, *un petit canon.*

DELANEY (*continuing*)

Well, I made good in the school and I was made a sergeant. When I got back to my own company the captain told me that he knew only the strategical uses of the gun but very little of the tactical uses. He was relying on me to break in a crew and he told me I could pick my own squad. I went around and got all the fellows from my home town.

ODETTE

The little Dolan was one?

DELANEY

Gee, you do remember. Then there was Doyle and Mack and Grantland. Nellis and Foley and Big Smith. Do you remember Big? He gave us our nickname, Delaney's Dirty Dozen.

ODETTE

Yes, I remember, Delaney's Dirty Dozen. I was proud that my Jeem was their sergeant.

DELANEY

I got that gang together and gave them everything I learned at the school. Take it from me, Odette, they were the fastest cannoneers in Camp Devons. They could get into action quicker, fire more shots and get away faster than any other outfit in the division. Gee, Odette, they wrote about us in the Boston papers.

ODETTE

I know, the little Dolan showed me the pictures.

DELANEY

That was the time we paraded in Boston just before coming across. All the home town folks came down to see us. Was I proud? Ask me only once! All I can say is that we just about expected the war would be over in a few minutes after we got into action. Why, we could do things with that pea shooter that the inventor never thought about. They were good! (*His animation gives way to depression.*) Then we came across to fight. Delaney's Dirty Dozen, the SHOOT, SHIVER AND SCATTER BOYS, the Fighting Demons. Hell! They sent us to a camp the other side of Nancy for range practice. For four whole months we did nothing but shoot at targets.

ODETTE

Is that all you did? That was where we met!

DELANEY (*tightening his hold about her waist*)

Sure, I remember. I didn't like France very much; too much rain. But when mess was over in the evening we could go down to the little estaminet where you worked. Just now I can say they were the happiest days of my life. Remember, each night when you would go around saying *"finis vin rouge"* and *"finis vin blanc,"* I would give you a wink and you'd break out another bottle for me.

ODETTE
And you taught me to speak English and (*very softly*) you taught me to love you. Tell me more about your work at Nancy. I, too, was very happy.

DELANEY
I wish I could bring them back.

ODETTE
In France it is always like that when people are in love. Do you not feel it now?

DELANEY
A little, but it's different now.

ODETTE
Then you do not love.

DELANEY
Believe me, Odette, I love you but it's that other thing. I can't get away from it.

ODETTE
What other thing, Jeem?

DELANEY (*looking directly at her*)
You know what I'm talking about. We were sent into action in the late summer of nineteen-eighteen and then the trouble began. Everybody who knew our little cannon knew it was valuable. Why, they only gave us three minutes to get into action, spot our target and destroy it. Then we had to get away in a hurry. It brought down the Jerrie's heavies and the infantry had to duck to shelter. You see our trajectory was such that the Jerries could tell just where we were firing from. So the skipper got cold feet and wouldn't let us work. Made us do police duty, sent us on burial squads and all that sort of stuff. The Dirty Dozen sure got the dirty work. There wasn't any fighting for that squad. We went through St. Mihiel and Limey sitting on our hands. (*He pauses and then continues.*) Delaney's Dirty Dozen. Hell, they

never fired a shot at the enemy. The Fighting Demons won the war on a quart of *vin rouge.*

ODETTE

Is that all?

DELANEY

In the middle of October they were getting ready for what they thought would be their last winter drive and they needed sergeants. Sergeants but not cannoneers. The captain told me to find a place to billet my platoon and I located this place behind the hill. I found you and the old man here: it was good to see you again. I had to report back to the company for duty. But, you know the rest.

ODETTE

No. Tell me more.

DELANEY

I went back and told the captain where I had left them so rations could be dropped off the camions. I went off with trench mortar bombers. Then the armistice came and about a week after the skipper asked me if I knew where my gun squad was. I told him I did and he told me to go and bring 'em in. You know, I came back here but there was no crew. I tried to find out from you but you—knew nothing. Not a word about them could you tell me. I figured they got other orders and would turn up any time. (*He gets to his feet and walks up and down in front of the house.*) I reported back to the skipper and he made some wise crack about them being in Paris or Nancy or not liking the war perhaps they had gone home. He sent me with another outfit down to Semur in the *Côte d'Or.* We stuck around there until June but none of them showed up. Then the outfit gets their embarkation orders and we sail from Bordeaux. I figured at that time they were already home. They send me back to Devons and give me my discharge. I go home.

ODETTE
Yes?

DELANEY
They weren't there, either. Then I got the idea they'd be along later, maybe they got stuck in a labor battalion or a rest camp or went A. W. O. L. and got pinched. I knew they were having a good time wherever they were. Along about November someone writes to Washington to find out about their boy and the letter comes back saying the lad was missing in action. By and by all of them got letters saying their boys were missing in action but that their bodies had not been found. That didn't bear out with what I told them about us not seeing any action. Then they got to asking themselves how it was that I had got back without a scratch. They knew I was the sergeant and if my men had been fighting I should have been fighting with them. They said I was yellow and after a while they wouldn't speak to me. Even the Legion didn't ask me to join. I stuck it out because I was sure they were coming back and we'd have a grand laugh all 'round. They didn't come back and I wanted to get away but my mother wouldn't let me. She died this spring and I just decided I had to come back and find out what really happened. (*He sits silent for a moment.*) They don't understand. Missing in action does not mean they were killed. Captured prisoners are missing in action; deserters are missing in action. I was no more a coward than they were cowards. There wasn't a fellow in the squad who was a coward, that's why I picked them for my gun. I wanted game guys and I got them. But, where the hell did they go to? I left them right here in October. You know that. Can't you tell me what happened, Odette?

OLD MAN (*rises from his seat just inside the door and shouts*)
Non! Non! Ma fille! Ne dis rien!

ODETTE
Shhh! (*She takes his arm and leads him toward the garden on the left. She returns swiftly to* DELANEY'S *side. Softly.*) You love me, Jeem?

DELANEY
Yes, Odette, very much. After those ten years of real hell this is something I had forgotten. I'm glad I came back for—I've found you. You aren't married, are you?

ODETTE
Only in my heart, Jeem. I waited for you to come back to me.

DELANEY
Can't you see now why I couldn't come back?

ODETTE
And you did not forget?

DELANEY
Never! (*He puts his arms about her and kisses her lips.*)

ODETTE (*holding him at arm's length*)
You will not go away again without me?

DELANEY
I'd like to stay here with you. I'm strong and we can make a go of it. But, I won't go away without you.

ODETTE
Not even if I tell you what happened to the little Dolan and all the rest.

DELANEY (*catching her shoulders*)
You do know then?

ODETTE
I'm afraid that if I tell you you will again go away.

DELANEY
Never without you, Odette.

ODETTE (*softly*)
I believe you, *mon* Jeem. (*She draws him to her and kisses him.*)

ODETTE (*continuing*)
You remember the day you brought them here? You remember how our home looked? Here it is protected from the enemy by the hill but for four years it was in the enemy's hands and it was destroyed by French and American shells. But, that is war! When you Americans come and drive the enemy away we come back only to find it in ruins. With our own hands we tried to rebuild it, to make it like it was. But my father was already an old man and he was tired from work and war. Then you came with your soldiers with an order to billet them on us. But where? You cannot billet soldiers in a house that has no walls, no roof. You, my Jeem, told the little Dolan, who was a grand soldier, to use their tents. They watch my father's feeble attempts to mend his home and then Dolan tells them they had better help him because they would be here all winter. They were young, younger than my brothers would be had they lived. Their young hands were of great help. Some would go to the dump and get salvage, others would hammer and saw and fix. In two weeks it was all done. Just as it is now. The little Dolan called himself the big boss.

DELANEY
He was a carpenter back home.

ODETTE
We did not know how soon we might have to move again, the fortunes of war, you know. The front lines were only three kilometres away but they were very quiet, very few of our men were holding the lines and no one could tell when they might fall back and the Germans retake the farm. But the little Dolan only said: "Hell, we've got them on the run now and they'll never come back."

DELANEY

I know. He believed that he could lick the whole German army himself if they didn't come any faster than four at a time.

ODETTE

But they did come back!

DELANEY

When?

ODETTE

One night, after they got the house all fixed. *Mon père* was so happy to be back in his own home he decided we should have a *fête* for the Americans. He would go to Nancy and get *poulet, vin rouge* and other things and we would have a very gay time in honor of our home. While they were working on our home I did the cooking for them. Each morning the camion would drop off enough, oh, for twenty men. They were working for my house so I worked for them. Three days later we saw *mon père* coming down the road leading a horse and cart loaded with good food and other things we needed. As a special honor he bring back one bottle of very fine cognac, only one bottle for twelve men. About nine o'clock we sat down to the table and we eat and eat and drink and drink. Just before midnight *mon père,* who was feeling very *gai,* made an address to the Americans. He tried to explain to them that this was not only his home, but theirs too; that always they would be welcome. They had won the land for us and now they had rebuilt the home, it was theirs, as much as ours.

DELANEY

Yes!

ODETTE

Then the little Dolan gets up from his chair to respond. He is not drunk, you know, just a little, ah, feeling good. So were all the rest of us, it was a *fête,* was it not? He

tried to speak in French of which he knew so little. While he was trying to speak the French and the Americans begin a barrage right over our heads. It makes so much noise we cannot hear ourselves talking. Then the little Dolan shouts in English of which I understood but little at the time. He asks them if they didn't come over here to fight in the war and they shouted they did. Then he shouts a lot more and they all get up and put on their helmets. Just as he got to the door another American comes in and asks for a captain. Dolan shakes his head and points off that way. Then he says: "What the hell's the matter?" and the other soldier says the Germans have broken through.

DELANEY

Where did they break through?

ODETTE

That I did not know. They talk too fast for me to understand. The other American soldier go away and the little Dolan becomes a great warrior. He gets his men together and they pull the little cannon around there (*Pointing to the left.*) and they set it up. Then he shouts more commands and they begin shooting, oh, so very fast.

DELANEY

They were shooting into their own ranks!

ODETTE

No, I am sure not. For over five minutes they just kept on firing their cannon. *Mon père* and I were back here where we were protected. We could see them working so fast, like the real soldiers they were, the cannon banging, all just like the war. Some Americans come over the hill and one said: "That's right, buddies, give 'em all hell." Then some shells began coming from the other direction. We were very frightened. One, two, three big shells burst right over there and we had to go and hide. Between the big shells we heard the little cannon

going right along and then came a great big one and, after that, we did not hear the little gun again. By and bye there was nothing but silence and darkness. We, *mon père* and I, waited until morning and then we went out. Only the little Dolan was alive but he did not live more than an hour. (*Her eyes full of tears, she gropes for* DELANEY'S *hand.*) Later, that same day, *mon père* and I, with our own hands buried them.

DELANEY (*rises to his feet and demands*)
Where did you bury them?

ODETTE (*looking at him through her tears, shakes her head*)
No. Alive they belonged to America. Dead they are ours. We must keep our dead, Jeem, so that we will not forget.

DELANEY (*tensely*)
Odette, tell me, where are their graves?

ODETTE
No! You will not take them away. *Mon père* went again that very day to Nancy and bought eleven French crosses to mark their graves. Many, many times there have come Americans looking for their graves but always we tell them they are French graves and they go away. Then we plant some bushes around them so they cannot be seen from the road but we do not take down the French crosses. (*Vehemently.*) They are French graves. (*She rises to her feet and takes* DELANEY *by the arm.*) Come inside and rest, my Jeem.

DELANEY
No. I could not rest now. If you do not tell me where the graves are I will search until I find them. (*They pass the door and continue walking. As they approach the hedge beyond the house they are met by the* OLD MAN *who stands with stick upraised.*)

OLD MAN (*screams*)
Non! Non! Vous n'irez pas! Je vous defends!

No! No! You shall not pass! I will not let you!

ODETTE (*reaching her free hand out to him*)
I'm sorry, *mon père,* but *il n'y a pas de remède.* There is no help for it. (*Quickly she slips past her father and pushing the hedge aside, reveals eleven tin tri-colored crosses to the astonished* DELANEY.)

ODETTE (*pointing*)
That one there is the little Dolan, next is Mack, then Nellis, Doyle, Foley. Down here is Gran'land, the sweet singer of Boston. All are here, Jeem, safe in the arms of France. But, you will not let them be taken away from us? They are all you Americans left to us French. Everything else has been moved away. (*Pleadingly.*) You won't take them, Jeem? (*But* DELANEY *does not hear her.*)

DELANEY (*standing very quietly with misty eyes looking at the little mounds brings his hand to a salute*)
Delaney's Dirty Dozen, all present and accounted for!

ODETTE
Jeem! Jeem! Promise me you will not take them away! See the flowers, see how we care for the grass. My father and I we come here each day to take care of them and pray. It would kill my father to lose them. You must not change it.

DELANEY (*his arm falling from the salute to its former place about her waist*)
There is nothing to change now, Odette. They can stay here just where they are; and you, and *mon père,* and I can stay with them, we who knew them and loved them and remembered them. But some time America must know that these lads of ours were killed in action.

CURTAIN

FOR GOD AND FOR SPAIN

by Dixie Willson

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FOR GOD AND FOR SPAIN

CHARACTERS

CASTILIO, *a pirate captain*
FELICIA, *his sweetheart*
LUIS SANCHEZ, *a merchant of Barcelona*
THE FRIAR, *a prisoner*
PINZANO *and* FRIEGO, *pirates of* CASTILIO'S *crew*
A YOUNG BUCCANEER, *who dreams of adventure*

THE BLACK MOOR, *a pirate ship, rides at anchor off the coast of Spain; its captain,* CASTILIO, *under whose skull and crossbones sails a crew of the most adventurous and terrorizing buccaneers of the Spanish main. The time is summer, 1474. The action takes place on board the ship, in* CASTILIO'S *cabin, furnished with rough chests, a dark table, and wooden casks which are used as chairs. The light is the dim glow of three or four lanterns. There is a door either back center, or up-stage right.*

The costumes are pirate clothes for the pirates; for THE FRIAR, *a monk's robe;* SANCHEZ, *velvet doublet and waistcoat with buckled shoes and lace cuffs;* FELICIA, *very full striped skirt, touching the floor, white blouse cut low about the shoulders, very full short sleeves, scarlet sleeveless velvet jacket, fitted closely, buttoned up the front and in length, to the hips. Over this is a belt of gold or silver links, and on her head a cap of starched lace.*

It is night. THE FRIAR, *seated in the light of a lantern, is reading a holy book.* FELICIA, *seated at the table, watches him.*

FELICIA
You are so peaceful! Does not your soul cry to be free! Are you so willingly a captive on a pirate ship?

THE FRIAR
If God wills.

FELICIA
Do you know why Castilio keeps you here? He says the presence of a holy man will stand between him and the devil. (*She leans across the table and speaks earnestly.*) Castilio is the greatest adventurer of the sea; the most fearless of them all! Yet have you noticed these days how strangely unlike himself he is? Always thinking! Always lost in a vision that seems preying on the peace of his mind!

THE FRIAR
Yes, I have seen it. (*Enter* PINZANO *and stands listening.*) He strides about the ship defying *every*thing! He laughs no more. He stares all night at the stars!

PINZANO
Do you speak of Castilio?

FELICIA
Yes. The Captain. (*She looks quickly at* PINZANO.) Have you not seen how something weighs upon his thought?

PINZANO (*sits upon a cask and answers thoughtfully*)
Yes . . . yes, that is true. I have seen it. There is some insect eating his mind. That's why *you,* Holy Sire—(*To the* FRIAR.)—have become father of a pirate crew. It is Castilio's fear of something!

FELICIA (*rising and walking restlessly*)
Never before has he feared man or heaven or hell! Of what can Castilio be afraid! He who rules the Spanish sea and who will rule all other seas!

THE FRIAR (*looking up from the book*)
If God wills.

PINZANO
Castilio will bring on board to-day, Luis Sanchez, the merchant of Barcelona.

THE FRIAR
He who buys the plunder Castilio seizes?

FELICIA
Yes. He who is rich, by the wind that blows Castilio's sails.—But Castilio no more dwells on his treasures and the price they bring! His mind is lost in something else.

PINZANO
Then you, his sweetheart, should divine that thing.

FELICIA (*determinedly*)
I *will!*
(*Enter* CASTILIO *and* SANCHEZ; SANCHEZ, *a small man, laughing and affable;* CASTILIO *in every detail of swagger and dress, a pirate captain.*)

CASTILIO (*speaks shortly to* PINZANO)
Bring my chest.
(*Exit* PINZANO. SANCHEZ *has lifted* FELICIA'S *hand to his lips.*)

SANCHEZ (*to* FELICIA)
You become more beautiful with every—

CASTILIO (*unceremoniously stepping between* SANCHEZ *and* FELICIA, *he faces her himself*)
Have you waited long?

FELICIA (*takes his face between her hands and smiles at him*)
Any time is long in which I wait for you!
(SANCHEZ *sees* THE FRIAR *and crosses himself. Looks at* CASTILIO *and laughs; extends his hands one in the direction of* CASTILIO, *the other toward* THE FRIAR.)

SANCHEZ

A priest and a pirate! Likely pair of partners!
(*Enter* PINZANO *and* FRIEGO *carrying a chest between them, which they place on the table.* SANCHEZ *rubs his hands together; is at once all eyes for the chest.* CASTILIO *takes a great key from his belt; unlocks the chest and throws it open.* SANCHEZ *eagerly peers into it; lifts out a glittering handful of trinkets and jewels.*)

CASTILIO

Friego, display the goods we have to sell.
(CASTILIO *turns away with little interest,* FELICIA *watching him.* THE FRIAR *reads his book.* FRIEGO, SANCHEZ *and* PINZANO *gather around the chest.* FRIEGO *brings out a length of bright colored silk and throws it over the table.*)

FRIEGO (*with a gesture*)

Spun for the English Queen! (*He brings out two sealed, colored jars.*) Honey from Corsica! (*He lifts out a package wrapped and tied.*) Coral from India!
(CASTILIO *has drawn away from them and is staring at nothing.* FELICIA *watches him closely.* SANCHEZ *drapes himself in the silk; brings a small jeweled saber out of the chest, and a plume which he fastens in his hat. He struts about.*)

SANCHEZ

Here you are, Castilio! I will advertise you well in Barcelona! (*He laughs.* CASTILIO *pays no attention.* FELICIA *turns to* PINZANO.)

FELICIA

Take the chest and Sanchez and leave me alone with Castilio. I must find out this thing that drags upon him. (*She looks at* CASTILIO.) See? He does not even hear me speak to you! (*To* SANCHEZ.) Go out and leave me with Castilio. Buy from the chest whatever you will!

PINZANO

There are ten *more* chests! (*Speaks confidentially to* SANCHEZ.) And I will make you better prices than Castilio! Since the goods—(*He laughs.*)—are not mine to sell!

(SANCHEZ *smiles and smirks and nods eagerly; puts a finger on his lips, indicating that* CASTILIO *must not hear.* FELICIA *holds open the door.* FRIEGO *and* PINZANO *exit with the chest.* SANCHEZ *follows, still wearing the plume and silk.* FELICIA *closes the door.* THE FRIAR *reads his book.* CASTILIO *pays no attention.* FELICIA *approaches him and places her hands on his shoulders.*)

FELICIA

Castilio, what is it you think of night and day! (*He pays no attention. She waits a minute.*) What is it, my Castilio, that brings upon you this forgetfulness of even *me!* I think—you are *afraid* of something, Castilio!

CASTILIO (*defiantly*)

I am the most fearless adventurer of the seas! My ships bear treasure and demand such contraband as never pirate ship before. I shall *own* the sea, and my children's children after me!

FELICIA

But—you are afraid of something, Castilio! You are—*afraid!*

CASTILIO (*defiantly*)

I! (*Suddenly losing his defiance.*) Yes, I am afraid! I am afraid—of the young buccaneer! (FELICIA *leads him gently to the great rough chair beside the table.*)

FELICIA

Tell me. (CASTILIO *sits down.* FELICIA *sits at his feet on the floor.*) What is it, Castilio?

CASTILIO (*bitterly*)

Every ship that sights my flag knows the price is contraband or capture. I have fought to rule the sea! (THE

FRIAR *leaves his book, and comes to the table, listening.*) I have made the name "Castilio" a name to be carried down on history's page, the greatest of all adventurers! Ruler of the sea. *Owner* of the sea! And my children carrying *on* the great adventures I begin! Fearless! Greatest of *all* riders of the sea! And now there comes one buccaneer, a boy, who talks of such adventure I find myself consumed with fear—that he will write his name in history over mine! He came to join my pirate crew to learn the sea. Fool I was to teach him! He sails and cares not where! He fights and cares not who! He seeks adventure and cares not what! I dare not throw him overboard, for fear his body will float upon the waves and haunt me! He is but a boy—and al*ready* fearless! Already hungry for adventure! I must be rid of him! Shall I let history wear his name when he is done, in larger letters than Castilio! (*He leaves the chair and strides about the room.*) I want no name but *mine* remembered as supreme upon the sea!

THE FRIAR

Is this the boy whose dreams you told me?

FELICIA

Is it he who says—(*She laughs.*)—the world is round?

CASTILIO

Yes, it is he. He dares to promise *any*thing in adventure's name! If he would challenge me to fight, our knives would choose the better man. But instead he challenges with *dreams!* If I should kill a man for dreams his eyes would never leave me!

FELICIA (*To* THE FRIAR)

Castilio is right about the boy. He thinks of nothing but adventure. I have heard the things he says! He will tell you the world is round. He will tell you he can prove it and sail *west* to reach the east! But of course he is only mad. Castilio need fear no mad brain! *No* man could do the things this boy makes words about!

THE FRIAR
He says he will find a new world.

CASTILIO
Yet what world is there but Spain—India—Portugal—England— The next world *I* would have him find is Heaven or Hell!

FELICIA (*suddenly reaching for* CASTILIO *pacing the floor*)
Listen to me! (*She pulls him into the chair again; comes up from sitting on the floor and kneels beside him.*) Castilio, the boy is only mad. His dreams and boasts are madness—nothing more! No man can sail west to reach the east; nor can there be a new world in the Ocean Sea, but waiting for a ship to find its shore! If the boy should tell such tales in Spain, would he not be thrown in prison for one who is mad and there live out his dreams in chains? And is not that the answer to your peace? All you ask is that he does not make adventures weighing over yours or make his name remembered more. So why not send him out to sound his madness far and near! Let it reach the ears of the king and all the people! Let them laugh and scoff and deride him and provoke him into shouting still more loudly that West is East and there is a new world to be found! It will not take many days for prison chains to lock upon his hands!—And Castilio—(*She smiles.*)—remains the great adventurer of the Spanish Sea! (*She lifts his hand to her cheek—caresses it—as if thinking for a moment.*) Why not let the boy tell his dreams to this merchant of Barcelona? (*She grows more eager.*) And you and the merchant tell the boy you agree with him. Tell him *yes,* the ocean is round. And yes upon it *is* another world! Tell him he must return with Sanchez to Barcelona and tell the tale far and wide to everyone! Do not *hush* his mad dreams but have him cry them everywhere! Let him be met upon the streets with laughter and see how soon his dreams will lose their glitter!

CASTILIO (*he has listened attentively—sitting up and paying more attention as she has talked. Now he speaks to* THE FRIAR.) She's *right!* It would make of him not an adventurer but just a fool! This merchant here from Barcelona shall hear the scheme and set it going! (*Voices are heard outside the door.*) He is returning! (*Enter* SANCHEZ, *his arms full of goods from the chest. He is followed by* PINZANO *and* FRIEGO. FELICIA *rises quickly; runs to meet* SANCHEZ; *puts the things out of his arms and on the table. She speaks eagerly.*)

FELICIA
Come here, Sanchez! Come and listen! Come, Pinzano! Come, Friego! (*She gathers them around* CASTILIO.) Castilio, send for the boy!

CASTILIO (*to* THE FRIAR)
Go and get him. (THE FRIAR *exits.*)

FELICIA (*explaining to* SANCHEZ, PINZANO *and* FRIEGO) Castilio has sailed as a pirate on the Ocean Sea until he is the ruler of it all! And now there comes a boy with schemes of adventure that rob Castilio of so much peace we must *rid* him of this boy! The schemes are mad—so we will tell the boy that he must shout them far and wide! You, Sanchez, are to urge him back with you to Barcelona and on to tell the King! Then there can only be one end; prison for the mad! Now when he comes—(*She speaks so as to include them all. They nod and register understanding of her plan.*)—agree with everything he says! Believe him! And send him out to set Spain laughing!
(*Enter the* YOUNG BUCCANEER, *straight and tall with eyes alight.* THE FRIAR *follows, and sits quietly at the table. In the mocking and cheering which follows,* THE FRIAR *takes no part.*)

THE BOY (*to* CASTILIO)
You sent for me?

CASTILIO (*suddenly gay*)
Yes. I've been putting mind on those adventures which you named. At first—I thought them madness. Now—I think what you imagine may be true.

THE BOY (*eagerly*)
It *is* true! I *know* it! The world must be round and I will *prove* it round. See here— (*He looks about for something the shape of a ball. He discovers a ball-shaped package among the things on the table; lifts it in his hand.*) See here—this is the world. This is ocean. This is land. (*He indicates. Everyone listens attentively, but mocking him and pantomiming ridicule behind him.*) I want to reach this point—from this one. (*He indicates two points near together.*) This is Palos which is west of India—this is India east of Palos. Yes, from Palos to India I will not sail *east,* but *west*—and in due time reach east! (*He indicates on the ball.*) Will not that prove the world is *round!*

CASTILIO
As I think of it now, you are right! The world is certainly round and you can prove it! (CASTILIO *winks broadly over the boy's head at* SANCHEZ *who, with a finger on each temple, makes circles pantomiming madness.*)

SANCHEZ
The idea is beautiful!

THE BOY (*eagerly to* SANCHEZ)
Do *you* believe it, too! (*He leans nearer* SANCHEZ.) And in the western sea I know there is a new world! I know I can sail there and find it! Will you believe *that?*

SANCHEZ (*considers thoughtfully—then answers*)
Yes. Even *that,* I believe—if Castilio does.

CASTILIO
Why not? What better could float in the sea than another

world! (*To* THE BOY.) Why don't you set out at *once* to find it!

FRIEGO

He will find a *new* Spain! Cheers for a new Spain! (FRIEGO, SANCHEZ, PINZANO, FELICIA *and* CASTILIO *cheer.* THE BOY *stands straighter, his eyes set upon a vision in the distance, all unmindful of the mockery.*)

THE BOY

If people would believe me—if they would help me to believe my*self*—I could start tomorrow!

CASTILIO (*slaps* THE BOY'S *shoulder*)

Why *don't* you start tomorrow! *We* believe you!

THE BOY

I must have ships! I must have sailors! Someone must believe me enough for *that!* Perhaps it will take years! Perhaps I shall be old! But some day I shall sail west to find the east! And somewhere in the Ocean Sea there lies a world for me to find!

SANCHEZ (*æsthetically*)

The idea is beautiful!

SANCHEZ

For the glory of Spain! Cheer the glory of Spain! (*All cheer.*)

FRIEGO

New world! Cheer the new world! (*All cheer.*)

SANCHEZ

West is East! Cheer west and east! (*All cheer.*)

CASTILIO

Why do you say it will take many years? The sea is as wide today as it will ever be. (*Aside to* FELICIA.) He will wait till I am old—and no longer can give him rivalry. (*To* THE BOY.) Why do you not get ships and go at once? (*He laughs.*) And I will meet you on the sea and capture them!

THE BOY

Yes, it is on my mind that you and other pirates will seek to stop me. That is why I must wait for men and ships enough to stand me by!

FRIEGO

He will take *one* world with him to find *another!* He does not stop with one ship! He wants them all! (*He laughs—then turns to* THE BOY.) On what do you build these dreams? Where have your eyes seen worlds unfound and sunsets in the East?

THE BOY

It is not with my eyes I see, but with my soul! What *eyes* see today, they do not see tomorrow. But the vision of a *soul* is set beyond the things that change!

SANCHEZ (*speaking with gestures*)

You will take your ships and sail west to the edge of the world—into the sky—then travel back over the sky to the east! A wonderful sight! Ships sailing east across the sky!

THE BOY (*a little angrily*)

You are making fun of me! You said you believed me!

SANCHEZ (*hurriedly—assuming seriousness*)

Yes, oh, yes, I believe you! (*He turns away stifling laughter against his sleeve.*) I am only thinking of the sky filled with sailing ships. Will you sail them upside down? (THE BOY *turns to* SANCHEZ *angrily.* FELICIA *soothes him.*)

FELICIA

He makes a joke of everything. Do not listen. He is a merchant of Barcelona. He is wealthy. He could buy you a hundred ships! (*To* SANCHEZ.) Now do you believe this boy or not? What have you to say? (*To* THE BOY.) Before you came he said he would take you to Barcelona at once—today! He said he would take

you on to the king, and tell the *king* these dreams you have!

THE BOY (*to* SANCHEZ)
You know the king? (*Eagerly.*) If I could but reach the king!

SANCHEZ (*preens a little*)
Oh yes, I know the king!

THE BOY (*thrusts his hands in his pockets—stands with his feet apart and flashes a smile at* SANCHEZ)
Yet after all who does *not* know the king? But does the king know *you?*

SANCHEZ (*his pride piqued*)
Why should *you* question that I know the king?

CASTILIO (*stands and faces* THE BOY)
You say it may take years till someone buys you ships and men. Surely then, the sooner you spread the tale, the sooner it may have an end! And the more who hear the tale—the more may be aroused to aid you with a ship! Why not begin to tell it far and near—*today?*

THE BOY (*breathless! Afraid to think!*)
To*day!*

CASTILIO
Why *not* today! Return to Barcelona with Luis Sanchez and begin to tell the world your dream!

FRIEGO
Cheer for today! (*All cheer.*)

THE BOY (*hesitating—eager—yet afraid. He sees* THE FRIAR; *crosses himself and goes to him quickly.*)
What do you say? Shall I find a world in the Ocean Sea?

THE FRIAR (*stands and faces* THE BOY)
If God wills.

THE BOY
How shall I *know* if God wills.

THE FRIAR
Time only tells what God has willed. If in your soul there lives a dream that somewhere lies a world to find, and that *your* hand will guide the ship—then go, for God and Spain!
(THE BOY *stands before* THE FRIAR *just one moment—then with passionate earnestness lifts* THE FRIAR'S *cross to his lips and kisses it.*)

THE BOY
For God then—and for Spain— (*To* SANCHEZ.) I go with you to*day* to Barcelona! (*All cheer.*)

CASTILIO (*to* THE BOY)
Have you clothes to take?

THE BOY (*indicates those he wears*)
These.

CASTILIO (*to* SANCHEZ, *who prepares to leave*)
And your promise is to take him where he tells his story far and near that everyone shall know the end to which his voyage leads!

FELICIA (*to* SANCHEZ)
And you will take him to the king! He must tell the king!

PINZANO
And to the market place! He must call out in the market place for men to make his sailing crew!

SANCHEZ
Have faith in me to do what should be done! (*To* FRIEGO.) And you will bring the chest ashore with what I bought?

FRIEGO
Tomorrow, Signor.

(*Bows with great deference.* SANCHEZ *holds the door open and* THE BOY—*eager, his eyes alight, passes through it and is gone;* SANCHEZ, *pantomiming with a hand upon his head—that* THE BOY'S *mind is only weak. Then imitating* THE BOY'S *lifted head and young stride he exits after him. For one moment of silence all watch the door which has closed after them. Then one breaks into laughter.*)

PINZANO
So departs the rival of Castilio!

CASTILIO (*joins in* PINZANO'S *laughter*)
I would give three bags of gold for a sight of the king's face when he hears a plea for ships to prove that west is east!

FELICIA (*her arms reaching around* CASTILIO'S *neck*)
In twelve hours the boy will be in the madman's prison, forgotten but for an echo of laughter in the streets! (*She speaks softly—her face against his.*) So are you—satisfied?

CASTILIO (*laughing and entirely himself again*)
Let us have wine. (*As* PINZANO *fills five mugs from a cask and hands one to each,* FRIEGO *sings a bit of wild gay pirate song, leaving off as* PINZANO *lifts his own mug of wine—the last.*)

PINZANO
To Castilio, ruler of the Spanish Sea and owner of all the seas there are! (*All drink the wine.*)

FELICIA (*lifting her cup*)
And to the fool whose east is in the west—what is his name that it may be forgotten? (*She looks about inquiringly.*) His name is what?

FRIEGO (*lifts his shoulders*)
I do not know what name he had. (PINZANO, *with head and shoulders indicates he does not know.* CASTILIO *stands with a swaggering air.*)

THE FRIAR (*looking up from his book*)
His name is—Christopher Columbus.

FELICIA (*lifting her cup*)
Then Christopher Columbus—to *you* a sweet extinction in the madman's prison!

THE FRIAR
"If God wills."

CURTAIN

TWO PLUM PUDDINGS

A Pantomime

by Colin Clements

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TWO PLUM PUDDINGS

CHARACTERS

PIERROT
PIERRETTE
CLOWN
THE PUPPET-MASTER
THE BARKER

SCENE: *The sitting-room and kitchen combined of a little white house in a cobble-stoned street near the Théâtre des Funambules. In the same street is a shop where one may buy plum pudding, and if there is one thing in the world that* PIERROT *loves almost as much as he loves his wife,* PIERRETTE, *and his little son,* CLOWN, *it's plum pudding. The walls of the room (into which we shall soon find ourselves peeping) are the color of pea-soup and the woodwork is the color of wild roses. A strange combination to be sure, but* PIERROT *and* PIERRETTE *having been born to the theater have a fondness for colors that "stick well wi' the eye." There are two windows at the back hung with paper lace curtains—the sort of lace one sees in those boxes of candied fruits which so mysteriously appear in the shop windows at Christmas time. There is a door right, another left, and still another back, which opens to the street. A fire, in an open grate, burns merrily at the left—of course, it's really a red electric bulb but it looks like a fire and gives a nice warm glow. Between the two windows at the back is a shelf of painted china, all in a row, and a big wicker trunk of table linen. This wicker trunk, with colored labels and posters stuck to all sides of it, adds a histrionic dignity to the room. It was used in those happy days when* PIERROT *and* PIERRETTE *used to*

travel by rail, but since then PIERRETTE *has used the trunk for her table linen. She is very proud of her china and table linen which was given her, the day she was married, by Pantaloon and Columbine. The other furniture, all painted white, consists of a table, near the center of the room, two very proper-looking straightbacked chairs and a high chair (that's for* CLOWN) *against the wall at the right.*

A NOTE ON THE CHARACTERS (FOR GROWN-UPS)

Pierrot is a born actor. You'll notice that soon enough when he comes on; he struts in a grand style and swings his arms in all directions. None of this back-to-the-audience acting for Pierrot. He was born to the theater in those good old days when actors were actors; when asides were quite as important as any other part of the play; when acting was an art and not a reproduction of life; when the land behind a closed curtain was a land of great adventure.

Pierrette, too, was born to the boards. She is a piquant little thing and loves the theater passionately; for her, also, the theater is a tradition. A great many people will consider her a little old-fashioned. She is, praise be! for she belongs to the days before actresses began getting themselves into society columns and misbehaving like Duchesses.

As for Clown—he was born a clown. It's like being born a king; one is or one isn't and nothing on earth can make it otherwise. "You could not become a clown by taking thought, you had to be born one. It was just a chance," says no less an authority than Sir James Barrie. The little fellow is getting on fast enough; already he can stand on his daddy's shoulder, wink both eyes, alternately, and turn any number of beautiful somersaults.

The Prologue: Sh-h-h! A big golden moon has appeared on the curtains; they part and a man appears! Can it be another Mr. Clunn Lewis? He makes three great bows—left, right and middle; raises his hand until all is silent,

slowly takes a folded sheet of yellow paper from his inside pocket and reads to us: The list of characters, the setting (which we can hardly wait to see) and, if there is time, he may tell us a word or two about Pierrot, Pierrette, and Clown. When this is finished he makes three more great bows—left, right and middle. With his right hand he opens the curtain and says in a loud voice:

"Chers enfants de l'art mimique,
Sous ma baquette magique,
Animez-vous, je le veux!
Des ce moment, troupe unique,
Ah! qu'un long rire homerique
Suive tes pas en tous lieux,
Debout, debout, je le veux."

These are the magic words. The curtains tremble for a moment, then part a little and there before us stand Pierrot and Pierrette, hand in hand. They smile and bow. Good Heavens, what's this! It's Clown, down on all fours, crawling between his daddy's legs. He jumps to his feet, bows, and throws kisses in all directions. The lights slowly fade out and the actors disappear. In back of us, just outside of the theater in which we are now sitting the Barker is heard beating a big bass drum and calling out: "Mesdames! Messieurs! Petits Enfants! Step up . . . step up . . . step up! You will always find amusement in our theater. Where else can you cut such a dash and see so much for the price you pay here? To-night, Pierrot, most excellent of actors, the beautiful Pierrette, and cunning little Clown will enact for your pleasure a new and original piece never before seen on the boards. Only a few choice seats left. Step up . . . step up . . . step up!"

The Puppet-master leans far forward and whispers:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the play is about to begin." (*He bows and disappears.*)

The moon has faded out, the noise of the big drum and

the voice of the Barker have gradually died away, the curtains part. We are peeping into the sitting-room and kitchen combined of the little white house in a cobble-stoned street near the Théâtre des Funambules.

Scene I: Anticipation

The door at the left opens and Pierrette comes fluttering into the room. How lightly she walks—like a bird on a green lawn! She hurries to the window and looks down the street, shakes her head and, just a bit disappointed, trips to the fire and gives it a poke or two. Again she runs to the window and looks out; again she is disappointed. Just to pass the time away she begins to dance, slowly at first but soon faster and faster until she seems to be everywhere at once; she has become a butterfly on a day in June, a butterfly who starts for a pink, sees a marigold, and, just as she is about to light, spies a red rose in the farthest corner of the garden. So it goes, round and round and round the table. Pierrette stops suddenly, thrusts her head forward and listens; some one has evidently whistled. She hurries to the window and stands there laughing and waving, she trips to the hearth, swings the kettle over the fire and quickly hides behind the wicker trunk.

Scene II: A Surprise

The door at the back is flung open and Pierrot struts into the room; he is carrying a paper bag which is almost as big as he is. He looks this way and that way, shrugs his shoulders and shakes the snow from his coat. Such beautiful snow is stage snow, it shines and glistens like a million tiny diamonds and never melts or makes a muss—another instance, is this, of art improving upon nature. Pierrot sets his bag down on the table and tiptoes to the door at the left. He looks into the other room, shakes his head and crosses to the door at the right and looks into the room on

that side. All the while Pierrette can hardly keep from laughing out loud. We have a suspicion that Pierrot knows exactly where Pierrette is hiding, for hasn't she hid in the selfsame place since the very first day they were married? But he wouldn't for worlds let her know that he knows where she is. A bit of a bluff is Pierrot. Disconsolately he crosses his arms, and sinking down on the wicker trunk throws one leg over the other. The temptation is too much for Pierrette, she reaches out and kisses his ankle! Then begins the wildest chase that ever was seen, Pierrot after Pierrette. This way. That way. Here, there and here again. Sometimes Pierrot almost catches Pierrette but she darts under his arm and is away again. At last, out of breath, Pierrette lets herself be caught. Pierrot folds her in his arms and kisses her lightly on either cheek. Then, overcome by curiosity, Pierrette tries to peep into the bag on the table but Pierrot will not allow this until he has been properly paid in kisses for such a privilege. Pierrette leans far across the table, and turning up her face prettily, allows her husband three kisses. In a burst of ecstasy he opens the bag and takes out three plum puddings, two large ones and a small one. Pierrette, needless to say, can hardly contain her joy and goes skipping gayly around the room while Pierrot, proud and happy, stands smiling first at her and then at the plum puddings and then at her again. A large square linen cloth is brought for the table; three plates, and two chairs. How quickly the table is made ready for a banquet—a plum-pudding banquet. Everything is now in its proper place except the high chair, which is carried with great ceremony by both Pierrot and Pierrette to its place at the table. Its place, of course, is between the two larger chairs, facing the audience; Pierrette nods to Pierrot and, stopping for a moment to see if the kettle is yet boiling, skips from the room through the door at the left to fetch a fresh kerchief, Pierrot picks up the paper bag, makes an air balloon of it, pops it and gayly laughing goes into the room, right.

Scene III: Temptation

The door at the back opens and slowly—first an eye, then a nose, and at last a whole chubby face appears. It's Clown. He jumps into the room, quickly closes the door behind him, ties one end of his long knitted scarf to the door knob and unwinds himself. He's down on the floor now turning somersaults all about the room. He stops suddenly, rises to his feet like a jumping-jack and stands, his legs far apart and his arms akimbo, sniffing the air. He shakes his head knowingly as if to say, "Ah-o! Plum puddings!" He moves quickly to the table and stands looking at the feast thereon with wide, dancing eyes. Twice he reaches out his hand to touch one of the puddings; a third time he reaches out, but again conquering himself, he puts his hands behind him and turns away. His good resolution does not stay with him long, for in a minute he has turned back to the table again. He reaches over and changes his little plum pudding for the larger one at his father's place. He hears some one entering the room and quickly, like a frightened mouse, scurries under the table and is hidden from sight by the tablecloth.

Scene IV: A Discovery

Pierrette enters the room from the left. From the shelf at the back, she takes down a little painted tea-pot, carries it to the hearth and fills it with boiling water. She again returns to the shelves at the back and takes down three cups and saucers; she stands for a moment looking out of the window then, shaking her head with an air of disappointment, she carries the cups and saucers to the table in the center of the room. When she discovers that Clown has taken the big plum pudding for himself and given his father the tiny one her face lights up with a happy smile. She goes skipping about the room in search of her naughty little boy—of course, she never looks under the table. (*This*

is, after all, only a play; things don't happen in plays until it's time for them to happen and it's not yet time for PIERRETTE *to find* CLOWN *hiding under the table.*) At last she gives up the search, runs to the table and rearranges the plum puddings; then quickly disappears into the room from which she entered.

SCENE V: MISCHIEVOUSNESS

Pop! The tablecloth is lifted and Clown's head appears. He rolls his eyes, turns his head this way and that, and sits there looking about the room cautiously. Satisfied that no one is about he quietly crawls on all fours and quick as a flash is at the table again. One knows very well what Clown is saying to himself; one can read from the tilt of his head, and the long, sideway glances at the plum puddings, the thoughts that are galloping through the Clown's curly little head. They go like this: "Why not eat one plum pudding? Just the little plum pudding? It would really never be missed." He's not so sure of this and stops a moment. Then, "Well, if it is missed I'll blame the cat, cats must eat plum pudding. Sure." So, having convinced himself that taking a tiny plum pudding isn't so very naughty after all, he seizes the little pudding and disappears under the table.

SCENE VI: SATISFACTION

The door at the right opens and Pierrot comes strutting into the room. He glances at the table, chuckles with delight and rubbing his hands together in anticipation of the very jolly party which is soon to begin, he walks with wide strides and a ridiculous swing of his body to the fire-place, where he stands warming himself.

SCENE VII: CONSTERNATION

Pierrette enters from the left. She sees Pierrot and runs to him. She is evidently telling him of Clown's naughty pranks for she giggles merrily as she tells her story while

poor Pierrot, holding his sides as if they might break any moment, is bent over with laughter. Hand in hand they walk to the table—and discover that one plum pudding is missing! Pierrot storms. Pierrette pouts. They go running madly about the room in search of the lost pudding. Pierrot suddenly puts his forefinger to his nose and rolls his eyes knowingly. He's guessed Clown's hiding place. He points to the table. Pierrette, half afraid of the awful truth, shakes her head "No." Pierrot stubbornly shakes his head "Yes." But why stand in the center of the room arguing when it's so easy to settle the matter by simply lifting the tablecloth? Pierrot does so.

Scene VIII: Another Discovery

There's Clown. But no plum pudding! He's eaten every last raisin of it. (*Since this is only a play it's just as well to tell you here that the little plum pudding isn't a real plum pudding. It's what is known as a "property"; it's a blue toy balloon which* Clown, *once under the table and thus hidden from the audience, pricks with a pin! The Theater is so delightfully unreal.*)

Scene IX: Forgiveness

Clown crawls from under the table and stands, shamefaced and sorry, before his mother and father. But Pierrot is a stern father, he has a mind of his own as to how children should be reared. In spite of Pierrette's protestations he insists that Clown stand in the corner with his face to the wall. This done, Pierrot seats Pierrette, fetches the pot of tea from the hearth and sits down at his place. Poor Pierrette, she can hardly keep her eyes from straying over to her little son in the corner; neither can Pierrot for that matter. And so what was meant to have been a merry festival comes to be but a miserable meal. Pierrot slices a great piece of plum pudding and eats it but, strangely

enough, he's suddenly lost his taste for pudding. Pierrette tries to eat but gives it up and sits looking down at her plate. There are great tears in her eyes. Pierrot stops, looks up at Pierrette, then slowly reaches across the table and taking his wife's face in his hand he looks deep into her eyes. He rises, moves around to her side of the table and whispers something into her ear. She's delighted. He pulls back the high chair, strides over to the corner and taking Clown up in his arms carries him to the table. The feast now begins in earnest. Clown, glad to be forgiven, is happy; Pierrot and Pierrette, glad to be forgiving, are even happier. Great slices of pudding are heaped upon Clown's plate, tea is poured by Pierrette and all is well.

And so the curtains close upon this unmoral little play of "Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child." But this is a pantomime for holidays, and holidays are made for children. Besides, whatever could a child be like that was never spoiled, just a little-plum-pudding's-worth-spoiled on holidays?

CURTAIN

COLUMBINE MADONNA

A Harlequinade

by Glenn Hughes

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COLUMBINE MADONNA

CHARACTERS

HARLEQUIN
PIERROT
PANTALOON
SCARAMOUCHE
COLUMBINE

SETTING: *The stage of a theatre on Christmas Eve. The stage of a theatre, bare except for a few properties, such as a small table, a long, plain wooden bench, two or three battered chairs, and a small gilt sofa. A few painted flats lean against the back wall, and a panel or two of theatrical curtains hang in each wing. A large door in the wall at back, right of center, leads to the alley. Only a few lights are on, as for a rehearsal.* COLUMBINE, *dressed in a pink ballet skirt, is curled up on the sofa, sewing.* PIERROT *is stretched out full length on the wooden bench, one arm hanging down touching the floor. His costume is very full and very white, with a black ruff and a black skull-cap.*

COLUMBINE
Pierrot! Are you asleep?

PIERROT
Yes.

COLUMBINE
You're not, either.

PIERROT
I thought I was. What are you doing?

COLUMBINE
I'm sewing.

PIERROT
Sewing what?

COLUMBINE
I shan't tell you. It's a Christmas gift.

PIERROT
For me?

COLUMBINE
Well, of all the conceited people! Why should it be for you?

PIERROT
Why shouldn't it be?

COLUMBINE
Because you don't deserve anything. You're too critical. You make fun of everything.

PIERROT
That's because everything's funny. Especially Christmas gifts. I know what you're making. You're making a handkerchief—a silly little handkerchief with pink roses embroidered in the corner. For someone to blow his nose on. Could anything be funnier than that?

COLUMBINE
Now I shan't give you anything!

PIERROT
I knew you intended it for me.

COLUMBINE
I'll give it to Harlequin.

PIERROT
Go ahead. His nose needs blowing.

COLUMBINE
Are we going to have a rehearsal tonight or not? Where are the others, anyway?

PIERROT

They've probably gone to church, like all the other people in town. Harlequin's sentimental, Pantaloon's afraid of dying, and Scaramouche likes music. Therefore they have all gone to church. It's Christmas Eve. Let them go to church if they want to. It's a very large and handsome church.

COLUMBINE

But tomorrow night everyone will come here to see us act. We always do business Christmas night.

PIERROT

That's the best thing about the church: it drives people to the theatre for relief.

COLUMBINE

But we haven't got a play ready. Whatever are we going to act?

PIERROT

Oh, something appropriate, as usual. (*He yawns.*)

COLUMBINE

We ought to be able to think up something good about Christmas—something original.

PIERROT

That's just what people have been trying to do for centuries, my dear, without any luck whatsoever. We may as well stick to the usual. It's easier, and it goes just as well.

COLUMBINE

I know! Let's you and I do a turn, all by ourselves. Will you?

PIERROT

If it's not too strenuous. I had mince pie for dinner.

COLUMBINE

We'll get it ready before the others come, and surprise them.

PIERROT
Surprise ourselves, you mean. All right, begin.

COLUMBINE (*dropping her sewing and springing to her feet*)
I know a fine theme. You and I are young intellectuals. . . .

PIERROT (*interrupting*)
Ha, ha, ha!

COLUMBINE
Hush! We are young intellectuals, and we are terribly bored.

PIERROT (*languidly*)
Why be so realistic?

COLUMBINE
We are sitting in our little apartment, quarreling. . . .

PIERROT
How easy!

COLUMBINE
And saying how stupid Christmas is, and the world is an awful place, anyway. . . .

PIERROT
Columbine, you read my mind!

COLUMBINE
When suddenly we discover that each of us has made a great sacrifice for the sake of the other, and our hearts are so touched that we forget our pettiness and promise never to be mean or quarrel again. We have caught the Christmas spirit after all, and are as human as anybody else.

PIERROT (*sitting upright and looking disapprovingly at* COLUMBINE)
My dear! You have the mind of a shop-girl. Hasn't your association with me done anything to improve your

taste? Really, there are times when I could with pleasure box your little ears. You know how moralizing disgusts me. It makes me ill. It gives me gooseflesh. I am itching now! (*He scratches.*)

COLUMBINE

Say what you like. I know what pleases the public. Now move over and we will start rehearsing. (*She pushes* PIERROT *to the left end of the bench, and then sits down at the right end.*) We've no time for your superior airs, Pierrot. Are you ready?

PIERROT (*pouting*)

I suppose so.

COLUMBINE

All right. I'll begin. (*She starts acting her part.*) Oh, dear! Christmas Eve is so boring, is it not?

PIERROT (*lifelessly*)

It is.

COLUMBINE

And such a silly custom. One wonders, indeed, that in an age of civilization such as this, we should be expected to submit to the observance of an antiquated superstitious holiday.

PIERROT

Absurd.

COLUMBINE

Were everyone as emancipated as we, Christmas would disappear into limbo with witches and blood-letting. Truly there is no consistency in human progress.

PIERROT

None at all.

COLUMBINE (*dropping her pose and speaking naturally*)

Stop answering me in monosyllables! Do you expect me to do all the talking in our play? For heaven's sake, take a little interest in your part!

PIERROT
It was your idea; I expect you to develop it.

COLUMBINE
Oh, you pig! You're too lazy for words.

PIERROT
For long words, yes. But remember, some very great lines have been written in monosyllables. Think of "To be or not to be." Can you imagine shorter words than that?

COLUMBINE
As usual, you're quite willing to quibble, but not to tend to business.

PIERROT
Oh, very well. I'll pick up the plot and carry on. Is it time to discover the mutual sacrifice?

COLUMBINE
I think it is, if you refuse to develop the opening scene.

PIERROT
All right. What is it we have sacrificed ourselves for?

COLUMBINE
For each other.

PIERROT
Naturally, but how?

COLUMBINE
Well, let me see. (*Suddenly.*) I know just the thing! I read it in a story once. You have a watch, a beautiful gold watch, and you need a chain to go with it. I have beautiful hair, golden hair, and I need a comb to wear in it. Unknown to me, you pawn your watch to buy me a lovely comb; unknown to you, I cut off and sell my hair to buy you a beautiful watch-chain. On Christmas Eve imagine our surprise and our chagrin to discover that each gift is in vain because of the other's sacrifice.

PIERROT
How tragic!

COLUMBINE
But not really tragic, because not really in vain. We lost the watch and the tresses, but we gained back our love for each other, and our faith in life.

PIERROT
Really?

COLUMBINE
Yes. Isn't it a nice story? So simple, so human!

PIERROT
Exactly. A nice story for simple humans.

COLUMBINE
Well, isn't that what we want for tomorrow night? Come, now, let's rehearse.

PIERROT
If I must. (*He sighs and assumes a pose.*)

COLUMBINE
First I'll ask you what time it is, and that will embarrass you, because you have pawned your watch. (*Posing and beginning the dialogue of the play.*) Pierrot, what time is it?

(*Before* PIERROT *can answer,* HARLEQUIN *springs into view through the door in the back wall. He has overheard the question.*)

HARLEQUIN
It's nine o'clock! (COLUMBINE *and* PIERROT *start.*)

COLUMBINE
Oh, Harlequin, you frightened me.

PIERROT
Ass!

HARLEQUIN (*laughing*)
Did I? But I only answered your question.

COLUMBINE
We were rehearsing.

PIERROT
An act for tomorrow night's holiday show.

HARLEQUIN (*coming down right*)
Without me? Well, of all the nerve!

PIERROT (*lying down again on the bench, disgusted*)
What conceit! You can play my part, Harlequin. It's an idiotic part, but it suits you perfectly. (*Yawns and stretches.*) You give him the lines, Columbine.

COLUMBINE (*rising and moving away*)
I'll do nothing of the kind. It's your part, Pierrot, and if you won't do it, we'll give up the play.

PIERROT
Give it up then; I never liked it, anyway. Lot of sob stuff.

HARLEQUIN
What was it about, Columbine?

COLUMBINE
I won't tell you. It was a sweet little play for just Pierrot and me.

HARLEQUIN
You mean to say you want to freeze me out? (*He glowers at her.*)

COLUMBINE (*placating him*)
Of course not, silly. (*Goes to him and takes his hand affectionately.*) But we can't all three act in that one. We'll think of another.

HARLEQUIN
All right. But you know, I don't insist on Pierrot's being in it.

PIERROT
That's kind of you.

COLUMBINE
We'll have a good old-fashioned triangle play, with a Christmas touch.

HARLEQUIN
Sure! That's the stuff. It'll be easy. And I can turn some cartwheels for the kiddies.

PIERROT (*sarcastically*)
Once an acrobat always an acrobat.

HARLEQUIN (*menacingly to* PIERROT)
Don't get fresh, little boy, or I'll leave a footprint on your nice white pants.

COLUMBINE
Hush up, both of you. Let's get down to work. Harlequin, go over there and sit down. (*Points to sofa, right.*)

HARLEQUIN (*going and sitting down*)
I've been sitting down all evening.

PIERROT
In the musty old church?

HARLEQUIN
Yes, and it was quite lively, really. You'd be surprised.

PIERROT (*drily*)
I'm never surprised.

HARLEQUIN
They had a wonderful Christmas tree, and games, and things to eat. No sermon at all.

PIERROT
How modern!

HARLEQUIN
And they even asked me to do a turn.

PIERROT
Which of course you modestly refused to do.

HARLEQUIN
Which I did with pleasure. For the kiddies.

COLUMBINE (*sitting down at right end of bench*)
I think that was very sweet of you, Harlequin. You are really generous.

HARLEQUIN
I never believe in highbrowing the public. Don't we live off them?

PIERROT
Not very well.

COLUMBINE
Now then, let's play the play. We are all quarreling—especially you and Pierrot. You see, we have forgotten the Christmas spirit, which is, to love one another and to sacrifice for one another.

PIERROT (*groaning*)
Again! Can't we have a play without sacrifice in it?

COLUMBINE
Not at Christmas time.

HARLEQUIN
Of course not. Well, I'm ready. What's my sacrifice?

COLUMBINE
Let's see now. (*She thinks intently.*) You're both in love with me.

PIERROT (*sarcastically*)
What an innovation!

COLUMBINE
And things have got to such a state that one of you must give me up. It is the only way to secure my happiness.

PIERROT
I think I recognize this plot.

HARLEQUIN
All right. Which of us gives you up?

COLUMBINE
Ah! You see, that's where the surprise twist comes. Both of you decide at the same time to make this sacrifice.

PIERROT *and* HARLEQUIN (*together*)
What!

COLUMBINE (*turning first to one, then the other*)
Why, don't you think that's clever?

PIERROT
Terrible!

HARLEQUIN
And then what happens?

COLUMBINE
I don't know. We can decide that later.

PIERROT
All that happens is that Columbine decides she is well rid of us both, and becomes a very merry widow.

HARLEQUIN
The audience will never take that. It isn't a happy ending.

PIERROT
It's happy enough for Columbine, and she's the heroine.

HARLEQUIN
But it's not happy for me, and I'm the hero.

PIERROT
Of course. Therefore I suggest that you change your mind after five minutes and come back to claim Columbine as your own true love. That leaves me free to do as I please, and everybody's happy.

COLUMBINE
How nonsensical! I shan't stand for such a thing. Let you wander off into the night, Pierrot, with Harlequin

here as my only amusement? I couldn't think of such a thing!

PIERROT

Very well then. I shall come back, too, and we will start all over again.

HARLEQUIN

Huh! There's nothing original about that. We always end where we begin.

COLUMBINE

But we can show that we have changed spiritually.

PIERROT

Again, please!

COLUMBINE

Certainly; we have revealed ourselves to each other. Both you and Harlequin will have made the gesture of sacrifice.

PIERROT

A very slight gesture, I should say.

COLUMBINE

And will therefore look at each other with new eyes. That will be the Christmas touch in the play.

HARLEQUIN

All right for Pierrot and me, but how about you, Columbine? Where does your change of heart come in?

COLUMBINE

Don't you see? My love for you both is purified by your sacrifice. I come to understand the unselfishness of your devotion, and that, in turn, has its effect on me.

PIERROT

Sophistry, thy name is woman! And thy middle name is hokum.

HARLEQUIN

I see what you mean, Columbine. It's a good idea. In fact, it's great. We'll use it.

PIERROT
But where do your cartwheels come in, Harlequin? I suppose you'll sacrifice yourself head over heels.

HARLEQUIN
Shut up! Shall we start rehearsing?

COLUMBINE
Let's! Pierrot, get up!

PIERROT
I won't.

COLUMBINE
But you must. We're ready to rehearse.

PIERROT
Go ahead. I can hear you quite well.

HARLEQUIN
But you're in the act at the start.

PIERROT
I know it. I'm ready. I can quarrel as well lying down as standing up. Better, in fact.

COLUMBINE
Oh, let him lie there—the good-for-nothing! Come on, Harlequin, we'll begin.

HARLEQUIN
Do you think we should have a prologue, spoken before the curtain? It helps the audience understand the play.

PIERROT
Spoken by Monsieur Harlequin, of course. Such an egotist!

COLUMBINE (*delicately*)
But don't you think prologues are just a wee bit out of style? Let's be more realistic. Do you mind?

HARLEQUIN (*disappointed*)
I don't care. Personally I always like a prologue, but I don't insist.

PIERROT
Please don't.

COLUMBINE
We'll open with the quarrel.

HARLEQUIN
I'll be walking the floor angrily. (*Rises and starts pacing.*)

COLUMBINE
And I shall follow you up and down, pleading. (*She rises and does so.*)

PIERROT
What energy! (*He yawns and turns slightly on the bench.*)

HARLEQUIN
Here we go now. (*Starts speaking the lines of the improvised play in an exaggerated style.*) It's no use, Columbine, I can't bear it another minute. You have toyed with my heart, and with Pierrot's as well. It is intolerable. I shall do something desperate.

COLUMBINE (*acting*)
I beg you, Harlequin, be reasonable. I love you.

HARLEQUIN (*turning suddenly*)
You love me!

COLUMBINE
Of course I do. But I love Pierrot as well.

HARLEQUIN
Oh! Damnation! (*Resumes his angry pacing.*)

PIERROT (*acting*)
Columbine, you have broken my heart. Here I lie, prostrate, the victim of an ill-starred love. Look at me and weep. Was ever a sorrier sight?

HARLEQUIN
I shall go and drown myself.

PIERROT
A good idea. Hurry, won't you?

COLUMBINE
No! No! You must both listen to me. I am the one who suffers. (*To* HARLEQUIN.) You know how I suffer! (*Running and throwing herself on her knees beside* PIERROT.) You know how I suffer! What shall we do? Oh, what shall we do?
(*During the speech* PANTALOON *has entered suddenly at upper right, unseen by the others.*)

PANTALOON
I don't know, but I'm sure something ought to be done. (*All three downstage start.*)

COLUMBINE (*rising*)
Oh, it's you, Papa Pantaloon!

HARLEQUIN (*crossly*)
You interrupted a scene.

PANTALOON (*unperturbed, coming down right*)
So I see. And what was the scene, may I ask?

PIERROT
A very touching improvisation on an old theme, Papa. Its pathos would melt your whiskers.

HARLEQUIN
It was Columbine's idea for a Christmas show. Very clever, too.

PANTALOON
No doubt. (*Crossing to center, near* COLUMBINE.) All right, I'm ready to hear about my part in it.

PIERROT
Ha, ha, ha!

PANTALOON
What's so funny?

HARLEQUIN
Well, you see, Papa, we didn't know where you were, so. . . .

COLUMBINE
Yes, you see, I couldn't count on you, so I didn't think of a part.

PANTALOON (*dignified but hurt*)
Out of sight, out of mind, eh? Very well, if you don't want me. . . . (*He bows and starts to leave.*)

COLUMBINE (*catching hold of him*)
No, no! Don't be absurd. Of course we want you. We'll think up a part for you.

PIERROT
You can sacrifice yourself, too.

HARLEQUIN
But it will change everything. I think perhaps we'd better get a new plot.

COLUMBINE
Oh, dear!

PIERROT
Thank heaven! I couldn't bear the other one.

HARLEQUIN (*always cheerful*)
Sit down, Papa, and help us think. But remember, it must be a Christmas theme.
(PANTALOON *sits on a bench.* HARLEQUIN *stands at the right of bench.* COLUMBINE *crosses and sits at right, on sofa.*)

PANTALOON
Christmas, eh? That's easy. I know a thousand plots for Christmas. How about the wicked landlord theme?

COLUMBINE
What's that one? Tell us.

PANTALOON
I'm the wicked landlord.

PIERROT
Naturally.

PANTALOON
Columbine is a ballet dancer who hasn't a penny and can't pay her rent, which falls due on Christmas Eve.

PIERROT
A fortunate coincidence.

PANTALOON
I come to collect the rent. I threaten to throw her out into the street.

PIERROT
And it is snowing.

PANTALOON
Very heavily. Columbine is in great distress. But then her two admirers appear.

PIERROT
Me.

HARLEQUIN
And me.

PANTALOON
Neither of them has any money, either.

PIERROT
True. (*Turns out his pockets.*)

HARLEQUIN
Too true. (*Turns out his.*)

PANTALOON
So very gallantly they offer the landlord the only things they possess.

PIERROT
Their honor.

PANTALOON
No; their clothes.

PIERROT
Oh!

HARLEQUIN
Good heavens!

COLUMBINE
And is the offer accepted?

PANTALOON
It is.

HARLEQUIN
But won't the audience be shocked?

PANTALOON
No. The young men retire to an adjoining room to disrobe. They throw their clothes out to the landlord, who makes a bundle of them and rolls it in his cloak. Then Harlequin comes out, wrapped in a bed-sheet, and asks for a receipt. The landlord makes one out. While he is thus engaged, Pierrot slips from the inner room, wrapped in a coverlet, and carrying a large pillow. Behind the landlord's back he quickly substitutes the pillow for his and Harlequin's clothes, and slips out again, carrying the clothes with him. Harlequin takes the receipt, the landlord picks up his bundle, wishes them all a merry Christmas and goes out. Pierrot comes onto the scene carrying the clothes, and all three laugh happily as the Christmas chimes ring out.

PIERROT
Very pretty. I hope, though, that I don't catch cold running around in a sheet.

COLUMBINE
I think they ought to manage to get some money out of the landlord, too, so they can order a goose and a bottle of wine.

HARLEQUIN
An excellent idea. Can you add that, Papa?

PANTALOON
I'll try, though it's not necessary.

PIERROT
Then the bottle of wine without the goose. Goose is greasy.

PANTALOON
We'll keep it in mind as we rehearse. Shall we begin?

COLUMBINE
Yes, right away. Get up, Pierrot. You can't lie there during this scene. You're supposed to be offstage.

PIERROT (*getting up lazily*)
You might pretend I was offstage. Where's your imagination? (*He stretches.*)

COLUMBINE
Get offstage, Harlequin. And you, too, Papa. I'm alone. (*The three men step into the wings, right and left.* COLUMBINE *sits down on bench, center.*)

COLUMBINE
Ready. I'm beginning the play. Don't forget to come on time. First Papa Pantaloon, then Pierrot and Harlequin. (*She poses as if forlorn, half crying, and recites melodramatically.*) Oh, dear! Whatever shall I do? I haven't a cent, and the landlord is coming tonight to collect the rent due on this room. And it's such a cold night! He'll turn me out in the snow, I know he will. I'll freeze to death in the streets. And on Christmas Eve! Is there no kindness in the world? No pity? (*During the latter part of her speech* SCARAMOUCHE *has entered at upper right, his guitar slung over his shoulder.*)

SCARAMOUCHE
Very little, my dear. But pray, why do you ask?

COLUMBINE (*startled, turning to see him*)
Scaramouche! What do you mean by sneaking up behind me?

SCARAMOUCHE
You aren't glad to see me? (*He comes down center.*)

COLUMBINE
Of course I am, but you interrupted my scene. We're rehearsing our Christmas play.
(PANTALOON, PIERROT *and* HARLEQUIN *all come out onto the stage talking.*)

PANTALOON
Scaramouche, you are interfering.

PIERROT
I thought you were still at church singing hymns.

SCARAMOUCHE
I was more welcome there than I seem to be here.

HARLEQUIN
Now we will have to start all over again.

PIERROT
For the last time, I assure you. I am inexpressibly sleepy.

SCARAMOUCHE
What! It isn't half-past nine yet. The evening hasn't begun. Come on, let's do something exciting.

COLUMBINE
Scaramouche, we have started rehearsal three times, each time with a different plot. And now we have to worry about a part for you.

SCARAMOUCHE
Of course you do. Did you think I was going to be left out of the Christmas play? Not a chance. You can't have a Christmas play without music. How idiotic it would be!

PIERROT
I'm afraid I shall have to lie down again. (*He moves toward the bench.*)

COLUMBINE
Don't you dare! You stay on your feet until this business is settled. (*She pulls* PIERROT *away from the bench.*)

HARLEQUIN
Can we work Scaramouche into the landlord plot?

PANTALOON (*shaking his head*)
No use. It's only designed for four actors.

PIERROT
He could be the Christmas chimes at the end.

SCARAMOUCHE (*indignantly*)
Me be the chimes! Thank you, I'm not a bell-ringer.

PIERROT
Very well. I don't mind. You don't have to be a chime to please me.

HARLEQUIN
Suppose you suggest a plot, Scaramouche. We're all worn out.

COLUMBINE
Please do. But first of all, is there any chance of others joining us? We simply can't go on changing plots forever.

PANTALOON
No; we're all here now. Mezzetin, Scapino, Brighella and the rest have gone to the country for the holidays. Only we five are left in town. It's entirely up to us.

SCARAMOUCHE
Good. A play for five actors. Let me think.

HARLEQUIN
Appropriate to the season, remember.

PIERROT
Sacrifice! Don't forget sacrifice!

COLUMBINE
With a happy ending.

SCARAMOUCHE
How about a real folk-play? A piece of old-fashioned mumming, with black masks, a sword dance, Father Christmas, Maid Marian, the Turkish Knight, Beelzebub, and the Noble Doctor.

PIERROT (*groaning*)
Oh. How musty!

COLUMBINE
Oh, I think that would be splendid! I love to be Marian.

HARLEQUIN
And I'll be Father Christmas. I have a white beard in my dressing-room. I can turn cart-wheels.

PANTALOON
I'm the Noble Doctor, I presume. I know the Latin phrases.

SCARAMOUCHE
Of course. We want lots of abracadabra. I'll do the black-faced Beelzebub and sing some ditties.

PIERROT
Now that you have helped yourselves to the fat parts, I suppose the Turkish Knight is left for me.

SCARAMOUCHE
Why not? You like baggy trousers.

PIERROT
That's no sign I like being hit over the head and left for dead.

HARLEQUIN
But you need a Saint George. You can't do a mummers' play without Saint George.

SCARAMOUCHE
No matter. One of us can double.

HARLEQUIN
I'll double. Father Christmas doesn't enter till the end. Besides, I know the sword-dance business. I wear bells around my ankles. And I kill the Turkish Knight. I love to wallop Pierrot!

COLUMBINE
Oh, this is going to be fun! Scaramouche, you're a genius to think of it!

PANTALOON
I must practice my hocus-pocus Latin and my pidgin-Greek. It's a good comedy part, the Noble Doctor. I must get some huge pills, too.

SCARAMOUCHE
Yes, like billiard-balls.

PIERROT
Who eats them?

PANTALOON
You do, of course. After you're killed. They bring you back to life.

PIERROT (*groaning*)
Good Lord, I knew it! Well, I won't eat them if they're as big as billiard-balls. I knew a man once who put two billiard-balls in his mouth, just to win a bet, and he couldn't get them out. They had to pull his teeth to save his life.

SCARAMOUCHE
Well, he won his bet.

PIERROT
I tell you, I won't swallow your pills. I'll slip them down the outside of my neck, into my ruff, if that will do.

PANTALOON
Stop worrying about the details. Let's run through it—what do you say?

COLUMBINE
Yes; let's hurry.

SCARAMOUCHE
Beelzebub, that's me, should speak the prologue.

PIERROT
Oh, dear. I knew we'd get around to a prologue.

PANTALOON
You're right. It belongs in the tradition.

PIERROT
Well, so long as Harlequin doesn't speak it, I don't mind.

HARLEQUIN
I think I should, but I'll let Scaramouche do it this time.

SCARAMOUCHE
Are you ready? Stand back until I've finished.

PIERROT
Make it as short as you can.
(*The others withdraw upstage and stand in a semi-circle.* SCARAMOUCHE *comes down to the footlights and addresses the audience. He bows.*)

SCARAMOUCHE
Gentles, for gentle you must be,
Else you would not be here, our play to see,
We supplicate your goodness to believe
That what your subtle senses shall perceive
Upon this stage, this happy Christmas night,
Was fabricated for your sole delight,
By those who in the action take a part,
And who, as ever, carry close at heart
Your happiness. Tonight, as oft of old,

(As many and many a merry tale has told)
We come with proper mummery to prove
That Christmas is the synonym for love,
And that wherever Christian souls unite,
Virtue attains to undisputed right.
(*He pauses for breath, and suddenly from the back of the stage comes the wail of an infant. The other actors look surprised and whisper among themselves.* SCARAMOUCHE *gives a quick glance over his shoulder, then decides to continue his speech.*)
Think not, however, that our holiday
Is wholly solemn. All that is most gay
Is welcome: laughter, feasting, dance and song,
Till the tapers shorten and the hours grow long.
(*He pauses again apprehensively and as he does so another wail comes from the infant. More commotion among the actors at the back of the stage.* SCARAMOUCHE *is tempted to join them, but hesitates. Once more he returns to his speech.*)
Believe this house to be a manor hall,
With spacious corridors and pillars tall;
You the lords and ladies of that house,
We the peasant mummers on carouse.
The sole reward we seek, beside your praise,
Mince pie, a pint of ale. . . .
(*A louder wail comes to his ears. He falters and starts again.*)
Mince pie, a pint of ale. . . .
(*Another wail. He turns around in time to see his fellows crowding out through the stage door at back, right of center. They hover excitedly in the doorway, some of them bending over as though to examine something.* SCARAMOUCHE *deserts his audience and rushes back to investigate the mystery, crying out as he goes.*)
Hey! What is it? Wait for me!
(*Now the other actors come back onto the scene, sur-*

rounding COLUMBINE, *who carries in her arms a swaddled infant. They all come down in front of bench, center.*)

HARLEQUIN
Imagine it. A foundling! And on Christmas Eve!

PANTALOON
Left to freeze in the snow. The stage door is no place to leave a baby. Very poor judgment on the part of the mother.

PIERROT
Not at all. If you're going to be melodramatic, what better place is there than a theatre?

SCARAMOUCHE (*pressing near* COLUMBINE, *who is rocking the child in her arms*)
Let me see. Is it a real baby?

HARLEQUIN
Of course it's real, idiot. Didn't you hear it squall?

COLUMBINE
Hush! It's going to sleep.

SCARAMOUCHE
Look; here's a note pinned to the blanket! (*He pulls the note free and opens it.*)

HARLEQUIN
Read it aloud.

SCARAMOUCHE (*reading*)
"To the kind-hearted person who finds my baby: I cannot take care of him any longer. Be good to him and raise him to be a noble man. He is a child of love." (*Looking up.*) That's all.

PIERROT
That's enough.

PANTALOON
A child of love, eh? Yes, yes, we know.

SCARAMOUCHE
It's a good recommendation.

COLUMBINE
Hush! He's almost asleep. (*She sits down on the bench, holding the child against her breast.* PANTALOON *puts his cloak about her shoulders.*) When he's sound asleep I'll take him home with me. Be very quiet, all of you.

SCARAMOUCHE
Perhaps a little music would help. I'll play a lullaby. (*He sits on the floor beside the bench and starts strumming his guitar very softly.* PIERROT *stretches out on the bench, regarding* COLUMBINE *seriously.* HARLEQUIN *and* PANTALOON *stand just behind and at either side of* COLUMBINE, *peering down intently at the child.*)

PANTALOON (*softly*)
We must remember to get some milk on the way home, Columbine. He'll be hungry as the devil when he wakes up.

PIERROT
He can sleep in my bed if he likes. I can sleep anywhere.

HARLEQUIN
Tomorrow I'll turn some cartwheels for him. (*Whispering.*) Do you think he'll like that, Columbine?

COLUMBINE
I'm sure he will. Hush! (*She studies the baby carefully.*) He's asleep.
(*The lights are slowly dimmed until only a spotlight remains on the Madonna-like figure of* COLUMBINE.)

HARLEQUIN (*in a voice of awe*)
It's our play!

SCARAMOUCHE
What play?

HARLEQUIN

Our Christmas play. It's the only Christmas play there is, the miracle play, and none of us thought of it.

PANTALOON

I wonder who did?

PIERROT

Listen!

(*A far-off, delicate pealing of Christmas chimes is heard.* SCARAMOUCHE *stops playing to listen. Then come the strains of a Christmas carol.*)

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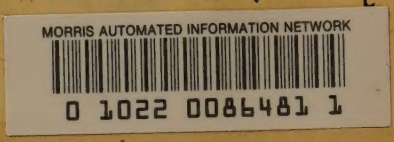

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